

“In this particular case (of I.N.A.), obviously there are deep political and moral considerations that may transcend precisely the legal issues. It will be in my estimation a mistake to assume that the men who had joined the Indian National Army are to be compared with the Quislings. Certainly those who completely reject their policy do not consider them as Quislings nor as traitors...”

—REGINALD SORENSON,
*Member, British Parliamentary
Delegation in India.*

THE STORY OF I. N. A.

**BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL
ARMY, THE AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT
AND THE TRIAL OF THEIR OFFICERS
IN THE RED FORT**

by

S. SUBUHEY

Author of

' Abul Kalam Azad ', ' Netaji Speaks '.

1946

ATMA RAM & SONS

**Mohanlal Road
LAHORE**

**Anarkali
LAHORE.**

**Kashmere Gate
DELHI.**

Published by
Brij Lal Pury for Messrs. Atma Ram & Sons,
Lahore

All Rights Reserved.

Printed by Ram Lal Pury at the University Tutorial
Press, Lal Chand Street, Anarkali, Lahore.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. INDIA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM	9
II. ON TO DELHI	32
III. THE AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT	63
IV. THE CHARGE OF IMMORTALS	79
V. THE STORM SUBSIDES	112
VI. JAI HIND	119

I. N. A.'s MARCHING SONG

*Kadam kadam barhaye ja ;
Khushi ke geet gaye ja ;
Yeh zindgi hai Quom ki
Tu Quom pe lutaye ja ;
Tu Sher-i-Hind age Barh,
Marne se tu kabhi na dar ;
Falak talak utha ke sar
Joshe Vatan barhaye ja ;
Himmat teri barhti rahe,
Khuda teri sunta rahe ;
Jo samne tere chareh.
Tu khak men milaye ja ;
Chalo Dilli Pukar ke;
Qaomi nishan sambhal ke;
Lal Quille gar ke,
Lehraye ja, Lehraye ja ;
Yeh zindgi hai Quom ki
Tu Quom pe lutaye ja.*

INTRODUCTION

No single topic is being talked about so much and none which is receiving so much sympathy in the country to-day as the Indian National Army, its birth, its struggle and its downfall and end. A great deal about it has appeared in the Press all over the country by bits and driblets, but it appears that no effort has so far been made to give a complete account of this Movement (for it was nothing else than a Movement) in a regular book form. For the present volume the Author has tried to make a careful study of the Movement and prepared this account in the light of the historical facts and statements given to the Press by leading political authorities, and the evidence which fortunately came to light during the course of the first trial of the I.N.A. officers in the Red Fort, Delhi, which created so much interest in the country and stirred the heart of every person irrespective of caste, creed, sex and age. The Author, in all humbleness, hopes that this little piece of work will meet the demand of the public to some extent in the absence of any coherent account available at the moment.

- S. S.

NETAJI'S ORDER OF THE DAY

Chalo Delhi'

There, there in the distance—beyond that river, beyond those hills, lies the promised land, the soil from which we sprang—the land to which we shall now return.

Hark ! India is calling; India's metropolis Delhi is calling; three hundred and eighty-eight millions of our countrymen are calling; Blood is calling to blood. .

Get up, we have no time to lose. Take up your arms. There, in front of you is the road that our pioneers have built. We shall march along that road. We shall carve our way through the enemy's ranks, or if God wills, we shall die a martyr's death.

And in our last sleep we shall kiss the road that will bring our Army to Delhi.

The road to Delhi is the road to Freedom.

'Chalo Delhi'



Netaji
Subhas Chandra Bose

I

INDIA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose traces the history of India's fight for freedom in his Proclamation of the Azad Hind Government in the following graphic words :

“After their defeat at the hands of the British in 1757 in Bengal, the Indian people fought an uninterrupted series of hard and bitter battles over a stretch of one hundred years. The history of this period teems with examples of unparalleled heroism and self-sacrifice. And, in the pages of that history, the names of Sirajuddoula and Mohanlal of Bengal, Haider Ali, Tippu Sultan and Velu Tampi of South India, Appa Sahib Bhonsle and Peshwa Baji Rao of Mahrashtra, the Begums of Oudh, Sardar Shyam Singh Attariwala of the Punjab and last, but not least, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Maharaj Kunwar Singh of Dumraon and Nana Sahib—among other—the names of all these warriors are for ever engraved in letters of gold.

“Unfortunately for us, our forefathers did not at first realise that the British constituted a grave threat to the whole of India and

they did not therefore put up a united front against the enemy. Ultimately, when the Indian people were roused to the reality of the situation, they made a concerted move—and under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857, they fought their last war as free men. In spite of a series of brilliant victories in the early stages of this war, ill-luck and faulty leadership gradually brought about their final collapse and subjugation. Nevertheless, such heroes as the Rani of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Kunwar Singh and Nana Sahib live like eternal stars in the nation's memory to inspire us to greater deeds of sacrifice and valour.

“Forcibly disarmed by the British after 1857 and subjected to terror and brutality, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while—but with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885, there came a new awakening. From 1885 till the end of the last World War, the Indian people, in their endeavour to recover, their lost liberty, tried all possible methods—namely, agitation and propaganda, boycott of British goods, terrorism and sabotage—and finally armed revolution. But all these efforts failed for a time. Ultimately, in 1920, when the Indian people, haunted by a sense of failure were groping for a new method, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the new weapon of non-co-operation and civil disobedience.

“For two decades thereafter, the Indian peoples went through a phase of intense patriotic activity. The message of freedom was carried to every Indian home. Through personal example, people were taught to suffer, to sacrifice and to die in the cause of freedom. From the centre to the remotest villages, the people were knit together into one political organisation. Thus, the Indian people not only recovered their political consciousness, but became a political entity once again. They could now speak with one voice and strive with one will for one common goal. From 1937 to 1939, through the work of the Congress Ministries in eight provinces, they gave proof of their readiness and capacity to administer their own affairs.

“Thus, on the eve of the present World War, the stage was set for the final struggle for India's Liberation. During the course of this war, Germany with the help of her allies has dealt shattering blows to our enemy in Europe—while Nippon, with the help of her allies has inflicted a knock-out blow to our enemy in East Asia. Favoured by a most happy combination of circumstances, the Indian people today have a wonderful opportunity for achieving their national emancipation.

“For the first time in recent history,

Indians abroad have also been politically roused and united in one organisation. They are not only thinking and feeling in tune with their countrymen at home, but are also marching in step with them, along the path to Freedom. In East Asia, in particular, over two million Indians are now organised as one solid phalanx, inspired by the slogan of Total Mobilisation. And in front of them stand the serried ranks of India's Army of Liberation, with the slogan "Onward to Delhi", on their lips.

"Having goaded Indians to desperation by its hypocrisy and having driven them to starvation and death by plunder and loot, British rule in India has forfeited the goodwill of the Indian people altogether and is now living a precarious existence. It needs but a flame to destroy the last vestige of that unhappy rule. To light that flame is the task of India's Army of Liberation. Assured of the enthusiastic support of the civil population at home and also of a large section of Britain's Indian Army and backed by a gallant and invincible allies abroad—but relying in the first instance on its own strength, India's Army of Liberation is confident of fulfilling its historic role.

"Now that the dawn of freedom is at hand, it is the duty of the Indian people to set

up a Provisional Government of their own, and launch the last struggle under the banner of that Government. But with all the Indian leaders in prison, the people at home totally disarmed—it is not possible to set up a provisional Government within India or to launch an armed struggle under the aegis of that Government. It is, therefore, the duty of the Indian Independence League in East Asia, supported by all patriotic Indians at home and abroad, to undertake this task—the task of setting up a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) and of conducting the last fight for freedom, with the help of the Army of Liberation (that is, the Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army) organised by the League.

“Having been constituted as the Provisional Government of Azad Hind by the Indian Independence League in East Asia, we enter upon our duties with a full sense of the responsibility, that has devolved on us. We pray that Providence may bless our work and our struggle for the emancipation of our Motherland. And we hereby pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of her Freedom of her welfare, and her exaltation among the nations of the world.

“It will be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and to conduct the

struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are over-thrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set up on Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country in trust for the Indian people.

"The Provisional Government is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty, as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the past.

"In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice—we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and strike for India's freedom. We

call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and all their allies in India and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in Final Victory—until the enemy is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a Free Nation.”

For many years before the formation of the Indian National Army the currents of events in India had been reverberating in the Far East, and the struggle for India's Independence had been regularly carried on by the Indian residents of Japan, China and the South-East Asiatic countries on national lines. In Japan the Indian Independence League had been organized by Rash Behari Bose, the veteran revolutionary, who, according to the Sedition Committee Report, had been responsible for many bomb outrages and conspiracies, and for whose arrest a reward of twelve thousand rupees had been offered by the Government of India. Rash Behari Bose had, therefore, left India for Japan in 1915 where, under the sponsorship of the Japanese Government he had formed and conducted the Indian Independence League.

The preparations of the Japanese towards their domination of the world had not yet become manifest to the people at large. For this end in view they directly and indirectly

encouraged Indians in the Far East to establish branches of the Indian Independence League to do nationalistic propaganda work from various centres in Japan, China, and South-East Asia. "For twenty years", says John Goette, "the Japanese have been grooming every dissident Indian they could encourage to come into their territory. They openly sponsored annual conventions of Indian elements under some fancy name of Pan-Asiatic solidarity. These were held in Dairen in Japanese-leased Manchuria long before the 1931 occupation." It is a fact that the groundwork of the '*hakko ichiu*' (World Domination) ideology had been laid many years before Japan openly declared her intentions of dominating the Asiatic continent, and in this respect it is correct that she tried to win over every Asiatic, whether Indian or otherwise who happened to be a subject of her enemies. As far as India is concerned, it is understood that Indian residents in Japan and other Far Eastern countries had their national organizations which did considerable propaganda for the independence of India. The activities of Rash Behari Bose received further impetus through Dr. Menon and Mr. Raghavan, who similarly advocated India's right for freedom in Malaya. In China and Siam Ananda Mohan Sahay and Swami Satyanand Puri organized the Indian National Associations and infused a new spirit in the movement by carrying on an

INDIA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

intensive propaganda for India's independence. Thus, before the World War II there existed well-established national organisations of Indians in every country in the Far East.

In 1937 a Conference of Indian nationalists was held at Tokyo wherein all leading workers including Rash Behari Bose, Swami Satyanand Puri, Ananda Mohan Sahay, Sardar Hari Singh and Giani Pritam Singh participated and decided to intensify the Indian Independence propaganda in Siam, Malaya and Burma by opening new centres of activities in these countries. Consequently strong anti-British propaganda, supported indirectly of course by the Japanese Government, was launched all over the Far East, and as a result thereof bitter feelings against the British germinated among a vast majority of Indians in these countries.

With clear and definite plans Japan declared war on America and British on December 7, 1941, and attacked Pearl Harbour with a lightning speed. She had given ample warning to her enemies about her designs on Pearl Harbour, Singapore, Netherland East Indies, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Burma and India through official proclamations as well as private publications, and clarified 'the vast policy of constructing a Greater East Asia'. The occupation of Northern Indo-China by the Japanese troops after

the collapse of France, had opened the back-door to Singapore. While the politicians of England and America waited for Japan to 'exhaust with almost mathematical certainty', she made most of the time by concentrating her forces and consolidating her position for tearing through the Far East. And while the attention of her enemy was diverted towards Europe, she influenced the Thai Government to open the land frontiers of Malaya for her.

And then, with a thoroughly planned programme General T. Yamashita led his seasoned veterans towards 'the impotent, seaward-pointed guns of the Singapore naval base' through the jungles of Malaya. "On 8th February", writes General Gordon Bennett in his account, "the positions to be attacked were bombarded, the unmolested Japanese air force bombing roads, headquarters and troop concentrations throughout the day. Desultory artillery fire was directed against the island until 5 p.m. when a heavy fire was concentrated on the first and second lines. This fire developed considerably at 10 p.m. when the Japanese embarked on their boats hitherto concealed in the mangrove swamps at the mouths of the rivers flowing into the Strait of Johore. They traversed the 100 yards across the strait under heavy artillery fire from the British guns. Several boats were sunk and many lives lost. The Japanese claimed that their difficulties were beyond

imagination and that the resistance was strong in spite of their heavy bombardment." The Japanese entered the island of Singapore, and nothing could save the disaster.

On February 15, 1942 the Japanese Sun fell over the British Lion. Singapore was lost and with it their years' of labour and millions of dollars worth investment were gone within hardly a week's time. "On the morning of February 16, 1942", states Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, "when we were marching to our concentration area, our Commanding Officer, Major Macadam, along with other British officers came to see the battalion and shaking hands with me he said : 'I suppose this is the parting of ways.' These words confirmed my belief that we Indians were being left in the lurch."

At Farrer Park Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt, representing the British Government, handed over the Indians to Major Fujiwara, the Commander of the Japanese Intelligence Department after due ceremony. Calling the parade to attention, Colonel Hunt spoke on the microphone : "Today I, on behalf of the British Government, hand you over to the Japanese Government whose orders you will obey as you have done ours."

Major Fujiwara took over charge of about 16,000 Indian army officers and other ranks,

on February 16, 1942, from Lieutenant Colonel Hunt. On the following day Fujiwara sent for a number of Indian officers and civilians and explained that 'as the British Empire was coming to an end the Indians had a unique opportunity to attain freedom, it was an ideal time for them to rise and strike for their country's cause; that Japan was prepared to help Indians in every way, even though Indians were British subjects, and thus technically enemy nationals, the Japanese knew that Indians were not British subjects from choice.' He further declared that 'the Japanese Army, would not treat them as enemies, but was prepared to treat them as friends, if they repudiated British nationality'. For this purpose he suggested the formation of an organisation which would receive all possible help and facilities for the work from the Japanese Government.

The Indian representatives suspected the motives of the Japanese, and therefore they promised to give him a reply after considering the proposal.

The Indian prisoners of War were there after put in charge of an Indian army officer, Captain Mohan Singh, a member of the 1/14 Punjab Regiment, who had joined the Japs when the latter broke through Malaya. He held a Conference of the Indian officers wherein he

said that the British had handed them over to the Japanese, who were not prepared to treat them as prisoners and they were also short of rations. They would, therefore, form an Indian National Army which would fight to liberate India. It was felt that although the Indian Army had fought bravely against the heaviest odds, the British High Command in return had left them at the mercy of the Japanese. "We felt", says Captain P. K. Sahgal, "that the British Government had on its own initiative cut off all the bonds that had bound us of all obligations to it. The Japanese handed us over to Captain Mohan Singh, who was styled as G. O. C. of the Indian National Army, and we were left free under him to fashion our own destiny. We *Bonafide* believed that the British Crown having ceased to provide any protection to us could no longer demand allegiance from us" Resolutions were, therefore, passed to the effect that 'they were all Indians despite their different religions and that they must all fight for the freedom of India'.

Civilians of Singapore, however, sent a cautious reply to Fujiwara. They wrote that as it was essential for them to consult the Indian Community of Malaya before making any grave decision, they had decided to call, during the first week of March, the Indian leaders of Malaya including Mr. N. Raghavan,

the President of the Central Indian Association for their advice in the matter.

In the meantime Rash Behari Bose wired to the leaders in Singapore to send up an official delegation of the Thailand and Malaya Indians to Tokyo where he was to confer with the Japanese Government on the same subject. The first Conference of Indians, however, met at Singapore on March 10, 1942, wherein delegates from all over Malaya and Thailand participated. They decided to send to Tokyo a 'Goodwill Mission' instead of an official delegation which Rash Behari Bose had suggested since they 'did not wish to commit themselves in advance to any course of action that may be adopted at Tokyo.'

The Tokyo Conference of Indian was held under the Presidentship of Rash Behari Bose from the 28th to 30th March 1942. Indian leaders from all over Japan, China, Thailand and Malaya were invited on the occasion, but the plane carrying the Thailand representatives crashed on the way involving the death of Swami Satyananda Puri.

The Conference decided that as the time had come for Indians living in the Far East to start a movement for complete independence, they should raise an Indian National Army for the purpose of invading India, and when free-

dom was attained, they should decide upon the future constitution of the country without the domination, control or interference of any foreign power. It was resolved here "that military action against India will be taken only by the Indian National Army and under the command of Indians, together with such military, naval and air co-operation and assistance as may be requested from the Japanese authorities by the Council of Action of the Indian Independence League to be formed and that the framing of the future constitution of India will be left entirely to the representatives of the people of India." It was also decided here to convene, in the following June, a full representative Conference of all East Asian Indians at Bangkok where it would officially inaugurate the East-Asia Indian Independence League and elect its Council of Action.

In the meantime an All-Malaya Conference met at Singapore on April 22, 23 and 25, where a Central Body was formed to co-ordinate, supervise and control the functioning of the various branches of the League with the object of organising works of social welfare, medical relief and political regeneration. A recruitment campaign was feverishly begun by various branches, and consequently the membership in Malaya alone reached 95,000 by the first week of May.

On June 15, 1942 over one hundred delegates from Burma, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Malaya, Indo-China, Hong-Kong, Manchukuo and Japan met at Bangkok along with military delegates from amongst the prisoners of war and held discussions till the 23rd. At this Conference the various national organisations were merged into the Indian Independence League. Its constitution was drafted and it was decided that its policy and programme would be identical with that of the National Congress at home. This Conference resolved as follows :—

I. “That a movement for achieving complete and immediate Independence of India be sponsored by this Conference.

II. “That this Conference endorses the view of the Tokyo Conference held in March 1942 that the complete Independence of India free from any foreign control, domination or interferences of whatever nature shall be the object of this movement and it is emphatically of opinion that the time has arrived to take necessary steps for the attainment of that object.

III. “That the Indian Independence movement sponsored by this Conference shall be guided by the principles indicated below :—

(a) That UNITY, FAITH, SACRIFICE, shall

be the motto of the Indian Independence Movement.

- (b) That India be considered as one and indivisible.
- (c) That all activities of this movement be on a national basis and not on sectional, communal or religious basis.
- (d) That in view of the fact that the Indian National Congress is the only political organisation which could claim to represent the real interests of India and as such be acknowledged the only body representing India, this Conference is of opinion that the programme and plan of this movement must be so guided, controlled and directed as to bring them in line with the aims and intentions of the Indian National Congress.
- (e) "That the framing of the future constitution of India be only by representatives of the people of India.

iv. "That an organisation be started for carrying on the Indian Independence Move-

ment and it shall be known as the Indian Independence League...

v. "That the Indian Independence League shall immediately proceed to raise an army, called the Indian National Army from among the Indian soldiers (combatants and non-combatants) and such civilians as may hereafter be recruited for military service in the cause for India's Independence...

vi. "That Indian Independence League shall consist of:

- (a) Council of Action.
- (b) A Committee of Representatives.
- (c) Territorial Committee, and
- (d) Local Branches...

vii. "That a Council of Action consisting of a President and four members, of whom at least one half shall be from Indian National Army in East Asia, shall be appointed by the Delegates to this Conference. The first President shall be Sri Rash Behari Bose, and four members, shall be:

1. Sri N. Raghavan,
2. Capt. Mohan Singh,
3. Sri K. P. K. Menon,
4. Col. G. Q. Gilant.

VIII. "The Council of Action shall be responsible for the carrying out of the policy and programme of work laid down by this Conference and as may hereafter be laid down by the Committee of Representatives and shall deal with all new matters that may arise from time to time and which may not be provided for by the Committee itself.

IX. "That a request be made to the Nippon Government that it may be pleased to place immediately all Indian soldiers in Territories in East Asia under their control at the disposal of this movement...

X. "That the formation, command, control and organisation of the Indian National Army be in the hands of Indians themselves...

XI. "That it is the earnest desire of this Conference that the Indian National Army from its inception be accorded the powers and status of a free National Army of an Independent India on a footing of equality with the armies of Japan and other friendly powers.

XII. "That the Indian National Army be made use of only :—

(a) For operation only against the British or other foreign powers in India.

- (b) For the purpose of securing and safeguarding Indian National Independence ; and
- (c) For such other purpose as may assist the achievement of the object, viz., the Independence of India.

xiii. "That all officers and men of the proposed Indian National Army shall be members of the Indian Independence League and shall owe allegiance to the League.

xiv. "That the Indian National Army shall be under the direct control of the Council of Action and that the said Army shall be organised and commanded by the General Officer Commanding, Indian National Army, in accordance with the directions of the Council of Action.

xv. "That before taking Military Action against the British or any other foreign power in India the Council of Action will assure itself that such action is in conformity with the expressed or implied wishes of the Indian National Congress...

xvi. "That all foreign assistance of whatever nature shall be only to the extent and of the type asked for by the Council of Action...

XVII. "That for the purpose of financing the Independence Movement the Council of Action be authorised to raise funds from Indians in East Asia ..

XVIII. "That this Conference having learned with regret that Indian in certain countries under the occupation of Imperial Forces of Japan are being treated as enemy aliens and suffer hardships and loss in consequence, resolves that the Imperial Government of Japan may be pleased to make a declaration to the effect :

- (i) "That Indians residing in the territories occupied by the Imperial Forces of Japan, shall not be considered enemy nationals so long as they do not indulge in any action injurious to this movement or hostile to the interest of Japan ; and
- (ii) "That the properties both movable and immovable of those Indians who are now residing in India or elsewhere (including the properties of Indian Companies, firms or partnerships) be not treated by Japan as enemy properties so long as the management or control of such properties is vested in any person or persons residing in Japan or in any of the countries occupied by or under the control or influence of the Imperial Government Japanese forces ; and to instruct the authorities concerned in the respective territories to give effect to this policy as early as possible.

XIX. "That this movement adopts the present National flag of India and requests the Impreial Government of Japan and the Royal Government of Thailand and the Governments of all other friendly powers to recognise the said flag in all territories under their jurisdiction.

XX. "That this Conference requests Sri Subhas Chandra Bose to be kind enough to come to East Asia and appeals to the Imperial Government of Japan to use its good offices to obtain the necessary permission and conveniences from the Govenment of Germany to enable Sri Subhas Chandra Bose to reach East Asia safely."

In a nut-shell the Bangkok Conference decided: (a) to unite all Indians for the immediate achievement of India's independence, (b) to raise an Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj) from the Indian soldiers and civilians in East Asia which was to be under the direct control of the Council of Action of the Indian Independence League, (c) to accord power and status of a free National Army of Independent India to this Army on a footing of equality with the Army of Japan, (d) to ask the Japanese Government to clarify their attitude towards this movement and their policy towards India, and (e) to lay down in clear terms that the Indian National Army shall be used ex-

clusively for operations against foreigners in India, for the purpose of securing and safeguarding Indian National Independence and for establishing in India a free and united democratic State on non-communal lines.

The Conference further demanded the Japanese Government to issue a formal declaration to the effect that "immediately on the severance of India from the British Empire, the Japanese Government shall respect the territorial integrity, and recognise the full sovereignty of India,—free of any foreign influence, control or interference of a political, military or economic nature".

The League was to consist of local branch committees for the various parts of East Asia like Burma, Sumatra, Malaya, Thailand, Indo-China and Japan, while a Committee of Representatives and a Council of Action were set up at Singapore, the headquarters of the League under the Presidentship of Sri Rash Behari Bose. The Council of Action consisted of four members,—two civilians and two from the Indian National Army, with a President at their head, The first Council comprised of N. Raghavan, K. P. K. Menon, Captain Mohan Singh and Colonel G. Q. Gilani, with Rash Behari Bose as the President.

II

ON TO DELHI

As a result of the Bangkok Conference the Indian Independence League was officially inaugurated under the Presidentship of Sri Rash Behari Bose, with its headquarters at Singapore and with branches all over East Asia. The Constitution of the League was : (1) Council of Action, (2) Committee of Representatives, (3) Territorial Committees, and (4) Local Branches.

The Indian National Army was formed on September 1, 1942, with Captain Mohan Singh as the G.O.C.-in-Chief. The cause of the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army received a great impetus from the events which took place in East Asia between June and the end of August 1942. Says Captain Sehgal: "In the first place, the Japanese forces met with most astounding success in every theatre of war and an attack on India appeared to be imminent. Every one thought that India would soon be exposed to a Japanese onslaught, and even the B. B. C. sent a message of sympathy in her coming misfortune.

"The last Indian drafts that had arrived to reinforce Singapore consisted only of raw

recruits and gave one a fair indication of the type of men available for the defence of India. Officers who came to Singapore shortly before its surrender said that there was no modern equipment available for the army in India. I was told that the soldiers were being trained with wooden rifles and light machine guns and that defences on the north-eastern borders of India were almost non-existent. Every one of us felt convinced that if the Japanese invaded India, there was none to resist their advance. This was the most distressing thought for all of us.

“In the second place, on August 8, 1942, the Indian National Congress passed the famous ‘Quit India’ Resolution and countrywide demonstrations followed the passing of this resolution.

“All India Radio, Delhi and the B. B. C. drew a curtain over the happenings in India. However certain secret stations, supposed to be functioning somewhere in India and the Japanese and other Axis controlled radio stations outside India broadcast freely about these happenings and the measures taken by the Government to suppress the freedom movement. . .

“The British Government claimed the sole responsibility for the defence of India and

had with contempt rejected the offer of our own Leaders to take charge of and to organize such defence.

"The information we had about the state of defence in India was by no means encouraging and the most optimistic among them could not be sure of the ability of the British to stop the Japanese advance. The civilian population could not even think of organising any resistance and must submit to untold sufferings and hardships. The scorched earth policy which the British had already decided upon and even began to follow must add very considerably to the disaster.

"After protracted discussion the only solution we could think of was the formation of a strong and well-disciplined armed body which, while fighting for the liberation of India from the existing alien rule, should be able and ready to provide protection to their country-men against any possible molestation, and to resist against any attempt by the Japanese to establish themselves as rulers of the country in place of the British."

But from the very beginning the relations between the Council of Action and the Japanese Government became straightened. Iwakuro Kikan, a Japanese organisation, which acted as a liaison agency between the Indian

Independence League and the Japanese military authorities, tried to interfere in the affairs of the League with the intention of dominating it and using it as a tool for the Japanese aggressive programme in India. The Council of Action resisted this domineering attitude of the Kikan, but Indians at that stage were completely at the mercy of the Japs. They had neither any arms nor any organised force. All that Rash Behari Bose could do was to condemn the high-handed attitude of the Japanese on the public-platform and ask for a reply by the Japanese Government to the Bangkok Conference demands purporting to :

- (a) The recognition of the Council of Action as the Supreme Executive of the Indian Independence movement in East Asia.
- (b) A full formal and solemn declaration by the Government of Japan recognising and supporting the absolute independence and full sovereignty of India immediately on the removal of British rule in India.
- (c) A formal and public recognition of the formation and existence of the Indian National Army on the principles laid down in the Bangkok resolution.

The reply received from the Japanese Government was not in any way satisfactory since it gave no specific answer to the questions asked for by Rash Behari Bose and only

affirmed that Japan had no territorial ambitions in India and therefore promised to help her to achieve complete Independence. But since the Council of Action had asked for an unequivocal reply by the Japanese to the Bangkok Conference demands, an answer of the above nature could not meet the situation. The Council wanted that India should be respected as a free nation and with that end in view it should be allowed to form a Provisional Government of India without any interference of the Japanese Government through the Kikan or any other known or unknown agencies.

Things reached a climax by the end of November 1942 when the Japanese military authorities asked the Council of Action to keep the Indian National Army ready for its March on to Burma from Malaya. The Council stood its ground quite admirably and refused point-blank to execute the Japanese demands unless the Japanese Government clarified all the points formulated at the Bangkok Conference.

On December 6, 1942 a Japanese troopship arrived in Singapore to carry the Indian National Army to Burma. The officers of the Army burnt all their records and badges. Captain Mohan Singh was removed to Sumatra and Major Kiani refused taking command of the forces. Officers and men refused to co-

operate with Japanese. On the following day the Japanese arrested Colonel N. S. Gill declaring him a British spy. In the circumstances the Malaya branch of the League decided, "that Sri Rash Behari Bose be requested to try every possible means to secure a clarification of all matters relating to the movement from the Tokyo Government by declarations, statements and otherwise at as early a date as possible, and that while the normal working of the movement will be carried on as usual any further forward move will be decided only after such declarations and statements are made."

The Council of Action resigned as protest against the interference of the Kikan and arrest of Colonel Gill, and Rash Behari asked for facilities to go to Tokyo and see General Tojo in person about the situation. As a result of it the Japanese stopped making any further arrests of Indians or harassing them directly, but they tried a new method of overpowering the League by launching a Youth Movement under the support of the Kikan. It began an intensive propaganda amongst the Indian prisoners of war, and those who continued to refuse co-operation with them, were sent away to unknown places. The Committee of the Malaya Branch of the League under Sri Raghavan thereupon sent a Memorandum to Rash Behari Bose stating in detail the

difficulties that had arisen in the working of the League after his departure to Tokyo, and informed him that the Committee as a whole would resign if the situation did not improve.

The Japanese came to know of this Memorandum and, therefore, forced Sri Raghavan to resign the Presidential chair before the letter reached Rash Behari Bose. But other members of the Council believing that their resignation would mean offering facilities to the Japanese to appoint people of their own choice on the Committee and make anti-nationalistic propaganda through such a puppet body, refrained from resigning.

At Tokyo Rash Behari Bose could not get the assurances asked for by the League, but he succeeded in having a temporary compromise with the Japanese Government whereby he was asked to remain in charge of the League till Subhas Chandra Bose's arrival.

In April 1943 an East Asiatic Conference of Indians was held at Singapore wherein it was decided to place the whole of the Independence movement on a war-footing. It was also announced that Subhas Chandra Bose was expected to arrive from Europe in two months' time.

Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Japan by a submarine on June 20, 1943. Indians in Tokyo gave him a rousing reception, and he made the following statement on the occasion.

“During the last World War our leaders had been bluffed and deceived by the wily British politicians. That was why we took the vow more than 20 years ago never again to be deceived by them. For more than 20 years my generation has striven for freedom and eagerly awaited the hour that has now struck,—the hour that is for the Indian people the dawn of freedom. We know very well such an opportunity will not come again for another 100 years, and we are therefore determined to make the fullest use of it... It is our duty to pay for our liberty with our own blood. The freedom that we shall win, through our sacrifice and exertions, we should be able to preserve with our own strength. The enemy that has drawn the sword must be fought with the sword. Civil disobedience must develop into armed struggle. And only when the Indian people receive the baptism of fire on a large scale will they qualify for their freedom.”

On the following day he spoke on the Tokyo radio :

“So far as India is concerned, what is most important to all of us is the situation

near India. During the whole history of the British in India, it had not struck one single British General that at any stage in the future, some enemy of the British might appear on the Eastern Frontier of India. The whole attention of Britain's military strategists has, therefore, been concentrated on the North-West Frontier of India."

"With the naval fortress of Singapore in their possession, our rulers thought that India was safe in their hands. The dynamic advance of Generals Yamashita and Ida opened the eyes of the world to the worthlessness of British strategy...

"Since then General Wavell has been making feverish attempts to put up fortifications on the Eastern Frontier of India. But what the Indian people are asking is this: If it took them almost 20 years to build Singapore, and only one week to lose it, how long will it take the British Commander-in-Chief or his successor to withdraw from his fortifications ?

"To us Indians, what is of primary importance is not what is happening at Tunis, Timbuctoo, or in Lampedusa or Alaska, but what is happening inside India and across our frontier.

“What is of primary importance to us, is, that the much advertised reconquest of Burma has ended in a shameful retreat... Even the fall of Singapore, and the loss of Burma, the greatest disasters in British military history, could not bring about any appreciable change. British Imperialism remains inexorable. Men may come and men may go, but British Imperialism goes on for ever,—that is what our rulers continue to think... You may call it lack of statesmanship or political bankruptcy, or midsummer madness; but this midsummer madness has its own explanation.

“The British Empire has grown out of India. The British people know, no matter to which political party they belong, that they need to reap all the resources of India. To them empire means India. They are now fighting madly to preserve that empire. Consequently, no matter what fate besets Britain during the course of this war, the Englishmen will endeavour to the very last to keep this empire,—that is, to hold on to India. Therefore, if I may speak frankly, I would say that it is not midsummer madness that British politicians refuse to recognise India's independence though they are in a terrible plight; it is midsummer madness that we should expect the English man voluntarily to give up his empire...

No Indian should ever cherish the illusion that one day England will be induced to recognise India's independence. But that is not to say that British politicians will never again compromise with India. Personally, I expect another such attempt some time this year. But what I want to point out, my countrymen, is that by compromise the British politicians will never recognise India's independence, but will only try to bluff the Indian people. Protracted negotiations are planned to side-track the campaign for independence and thereby under-mine the national will, as they did between December 1941 and April 1942...

"Therefore, we should, once and for all give up hope of any compromise with British Imperialism. Our independence admits of no compromises. Freedom is only won when the British and their allies quit India for good. And those who really want liberty must fight for it and pay for it with their blood... Countrymen and friends, let us, therefore, carry on the fight for liberty, inside India and outside India, with all our strength and vigour. Let us continue the battle with unshakable faith till the day that British Imperialism will be broken up and out of its ashes India will once again emerge an independent nation. In this struggle there is no going back, and there can be no faltering.

We must march onward till victory is achieved and freedom won."

Subhas Bose arrived in Singapore on July 2, 1943, and on the 4th the inaugural session of the Indian Independence League was held. On this occasion Rash Behari Bose formally handed over the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League to Subhas Chandra Bose, who was further honoured with the title of "*Netaji*" or the revered leader. Addressing the gathering Netaji spoke :—

"Friends : The time has now come for freedom-loving Indians to act. Action in a war-crisis demands, above all, military discipline, as well as unflinching loyalty to the cause. I, therefore, call upon all my countrymen in East Asia to line up in one solid phalanx and prepare for the grim fight that is ahead of us. I am confident that they will do so . . . I have publicly declared several times that when I left homeland in 1941 on an important mission, it was in accordance with the will of the vast majority of my countrymen. Since despite all the restrictions imposed by the C. I. D., I have remained in constant touch with my countrymen at home . . .

"Patriotic Indians abroad have been working as genuine trustees of the freedom-

fighters at home. I can assure everybody once again that whatever we have done up till now, or may do in future, has been and will be for the freedom of India, and we shall never do anything that is either against the interests of India or will not be in accordance with the will of our people . . .

“In order to mobilise all our forces effectively, I intend organising a Provisional Government of Free India . . . By winning freedom through our own efforts and sacrifice, we shall be acquiring the strength whereby we shall preserve our liberty for all time . . . I warn you that though we are absolutely sure of our final victory, we can never afford to under-estimate the enemy, and we should even be prepared for temporary setback. We have a grim fight ahead of us—for the enemy is at once powerful, unscrupulous and ruthless. In this final march to freedom, you will have to face hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death. Only when you pass this test will freedom be yours. I am confident that you will do so and thereby bring freedom and prosperity to your enslaved and impoverished land” . . .

On July 5, 1943, Netaji attended the Military Review where he addressed the Indian National Army :—

“Soldiers of India’s Army of Liberation !
Today is the proudest day of my life. Today

it has pleased Providence to give me the unique honour of announcing to the whole world that India's Army of Liberation has come into being. This Army has now been drawn up in military formation on the battlefield of Singapore, which was once the bulwark of the British Empire. This is the Army that will emancipate India from the British yoke. Every Indian must feel proud that this Indian Army has been organised entirely under Indian leadership, and that when the historic moment arrives, under Indian leadership it will go into battle . . . Standing today on the graveyard of the British Empire, even a child is convinced that the almighty British Empire is already a thing of the past.

“Comrades ! My soldiers ! Let your battle-cry be : ‘To Delhi, to Delhi’. How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this, that we shall ultimately win, and our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the Victory parade on another graveyard of the British Empire—the Lal Qilla of Ancient Delhi...

“Throughout my public career, I have always felt that though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she lacks one thing, an Army of Liberation. George Washington of America could fight and win freedom, because he had his army. Garibaldi

could liberate Italy because he had his armed volunteers behind him. It is your privilege and honour to be the first to come forward and organise India's National Army...Soldiers who always remain faithful to their nation, who perform their duty under all circumstances, and who are always prepared to sacrifice their lives, are invincible. Engrave these three ideals in the inmost core of your hearts.

“Comrades! You are today the custodians of India's national honour and the embodiment of India's hopes and aspirations. So conduct yourself that your countrymen may bless you and posterity may be proud of you. I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory. For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, suffering, forced marches and death. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free. May God now bless our Army and grant us victory in the coming fight!”

A mass rally was held in Singapore on July 9, 1943. Netaji addressed a gathering of more than one lakh of men and women :—

“I would like to tell you quite frankly what made me leave home and homeland, on

a journey that was fraught with danger of every kind. I was lodged safely in a British prison, where I silently resolved to risk everything in the attempt to escape from the clutches of the British. Having been in prison eleven times, it was much easier and much safer for me to continue there, but I felt that the cause of India's Independence demanded a journey abroad, regardless of the risk that it involved. It took me full three months of prayer and meditation to decide if I had strength enough to face death in fulfilling my duty. Before I could slip out of India, I had to get out of prison—and in order to do so, I had to go on hunger-strike demanding my release. I knew that neither in India, nor in Ireland, had a prisoner succeeded in forcing the British Government to release him. I knew also that Terence Macswiney and Jatin Das had died in the attempt to force the Government's hands. But I felt convinced that I had an historic task to fulfil. So I took the plunge, and after seven days of hunger-strike the Government unexpectedly got unnerved and set me free, with the intention of taking me back to prison again after a month or two. But before they could seize me again, I became a free man...

“ Friends ! You know that I have been actively working in the Independence movement ever since I left the University in 1921.

I have been through all the civil disobedience campaigns during the last two decades. In addition to this, I have been repeatedly put in prison without trial, on the suspicion of having been connected with secret revolutionary movements—whether non-violent or violent. In the light of this experience, I came to the conclusion that all the efforts that we could put forward inside India, would not suffice to expel the British from our country...

“To put it briefly, therefore, my object in leaving India was to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home... On the other hand, the supplementary help from outside which the national struggle at home so urgently needs is in reality very small. The help that our countrymen at home needed and still need is a two-fold one: moral and material. Firstly, they have to be morally convinced that their victory is assured. Secondly, they have to be given military help from outside...

“The time has come when I can openly tell the whole world including our enemies, as to how it is proposed to bring about national liberation. Indians outside India, particularly Indians in East Asia, are going to organise a fighting force which will be powerful enough to attack the British Army in India. When we do so, a revolution will break out, not only

among the civil population at home, but also among the Indian Army which is now standing under the British Flag. When the British Government is thus attacked from both sides—from inside India and from outside—it will collapse, and the Indian people will then regain their liberty. According to my plan, therefore, it is not even necessary to bother about the attitude of the Axis powers towards India. If Indians outside and inside India will do their duty, it is possible for the Indian people to throw the British out of India and liberate 38 millions of their countrymen... Friends, let the slogan of the three million Indians in East Asia be: "Total Mobilisation for a Total War." Out of this Total Mobilisation, I expect at least three lakh soldiers and three crores of dollars. I want also a unit of brave Indian women to form a death-defying Regiment who will wield the sword which the brave members of Rani of Jhansi wielded in India's First War of Independence in 1857.

"Our countrymen at home are now hard-pressed and they are demanding a Second Front. Give me total mobilisation in East Asia and I promise you a second front—a real second front for the Indian struggle."

Yet another mass rally was held in Singapore on August 15, 1943 when Netaji

spoke about the progress of the Indian National Army and his future plans :—

“A year has rolled by since Mahatma Gandhi was put in prison for the crime of demanding the withdrawal of the British from India. Since then the civil disobedience movement as well as sabotage activities have gone on with unabated vigour. But we have not won freedom. And we shall not win freedom till we put up a second front on the Indo-Burma frontier and call upon the Indian people and the British Indian Army to take up arms against the British and their allies in India...

“It is today a very great pleasure for me to see so many of my Muslim countrymen in this gathering of ours. I thank them heartily for the welcome they have given me and for the handsome purse they have offered for the Indian Independence Movement... And let the whole world know, and let our enemies know that all Indians in East Asia are united regardless of religion or caste and they are determined to fight for the freedom of their common Motherland.”

A Special Order of the Day was issued by Netaji on his taking over the Supreme Command of the Indian National Army on August 25, 1943 :

“In the interests of the Indian independence movement, I have taken over the direct command of our army from this day. This is a matter of joy and pride to me because for an Indian there can be no greater honour than to be the commander of India’s army of liberation. But I am conscious of the magnitude of the task that I have undertaken and I feel weighed down with a sense of responsibility. I pray to God to give me the necessary strength to fulfil my duty under all circumstances, however difficult and trying they may be. I regard myself as a servant of 38 crores of my countrymen, who profess different religious faiths. I am determined to discharge my duties in such a manner that the interests of these 38 crores will be safe in my hands and that every single Indian will have reason to put complete trust in the coming struggle for the emancipation of our Motherland, for the establishment of a Government of Free India, and for the creation of a permanent army which will guarantee Indian Independence for all time.

“The Azad Hind Fauj has a vital role to play. To fulfil this role, we must weld ourselves into an army that will have only one goal—the freedom of India—and only one will—to do or die in the cause of India’s freedom. I have complete faith in the justice and in the invincibility of our cause. 38 crores of human

beings, who form one-fifth of the human race, have a right to be free and they are now prepared to pay the price of freedom. There is no power on earth that can deprive us of our birth-right of liberty. Comrades ! Officers and men ! With your unstinted support and unflinching loyalty the Azad Hind Fauj will become an instrument of India's liberation. Victory will certainly be ours."

This Order of the Day ended with the slogan of '*Delhi Chalo*'.

In connection with a propaganda and recruitment tour Netaji arrived in Rangoon on September 26, 1943. He addressed a meeting at the tomb of Emperor Bahadur Shah :—

"It is perhaps strange, may be a lucky coincidence of history, that while the remains of India's last Emperor rest on the soil of Burma, the remains of the last King of Free Burma now rest on the soil of India.

"We express our unshakable determination before a sacred memorial, before the mortal remains of the last fighter for India's freedom, the man who was an Emperor among men and a man among Emperors... Now when we are engaged in the last war for India's independence, it is all the more necessary for us to renew our unshakable determination to

fight this last war for independence to a finish, regardless of all sufferings and sacrifices, regardless of all difficulties in our path, regardless of the length of this war—so that at long last the enemy, the common enemy of Burma and India, will be finally overthrown and we will be free not only within our homes, but free as comrades marching shoulder to shoulder fulfilling the common destiny of mankind.

* “And now I shall close these few remarks by quoting the English meaning of a couplet which was composed by Bahadur Shah himself: “So long as the last particle of faith exists in souls of India’s freedom-fighters, the sword of India shall continue to penetrate the heart of London”.

*“Ghazion men bu rahe gi jab talak Iman ki,
Takhte London tak chalegi tegh Hindustan ki.”*

On October 21, 1943 Netaji announced the establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. The Proclamation was signed by Subhas Chandra Bose as Head of State, Prime Minister and Minister for War and Foreign Affairs, Captain Mrs. Lakshmi (Women’s Organization), S. A. Ayer (Publicity and Propaganda), Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Chatterji (Finance), Lieutenant-Colonel Aziz Ahmad, Lieutenant N. S. Bhagat, Lieutenant-Colonel J. K. Bhonsle, Lieutenant-Colonel Gulzara

Singh, Lieutenant-Colonel M. Z. Kiani, Lieutenant-Colonel A. D. Loganadan, Lieutenant-Colonel Ehsan Qadir, Lieutenant-Colonel Shah Nawaz (Representatives of armed forces), A. M. Sahay (Secretary with Ministerial rank), Rash Behari Bose (Supreme Adviser), Karim Ghani, Debnath Das, D. M. Khan, A. Yellappa J. Thivy, Sardar Ishar Singh (Advisers), and A. N. Sarkar (Legal Adviser).

The Proclamation was received by the delegates and all others present with loud applause and cheering. After that Netaji himself took an oath of allegiance to India in the following words :

“ In the name of God, I take this sacred oath that to liberate India and the thirty-eight crores of my countrymen, I Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue this sacred war of freedom till the last breath of my life. I shall always remain a servant of India and look after the welfare of thirty-eight crores of Indian brothers and sisters. This shall be for me my highest duty. Even after winning freedom, I will always be prepared to shed the last drop of my blood for the preservation of India's freedom.”

Loud and prolonged cheers followed with the outbursts of “Subhas Bose Ki Jai”, “Azad Hakumat Ki Jai”, and “Azad Hind Ki Jai”. Other members of the Council thereafter took

the oath of allegiance to India and to Netaji. After that Netaji addressed the gathering :

“During the last few months, the situation inside India has been developing in a manner favourable to our cause, though it has meant more and more suffering for the people. The political unrest in India has been greatly accentuated by the famine conditions prevailing in several parts of India—and particularly in Bengal. There can be no doubt that these famine conditions have been largely due to the policy of ruthless exploitation of India’s food and other resources for Britain’s war purposes over a period of nearly four years. You are aware that on behalf of our league, I made a free and unconditional offer of one hundred thousand tons of rice for our starving countrymen at home as a first instalment. Not only was this offer not accepted by the British authorities in India—but we were given only abuse in return.

“You are probably aware that since July last, I have toured more than once in the mainland of Malaya, in Thailand, in Burma and in Indo-China. The enthusiasm among our countrymen that I have met with everywhere has not only been encouraging, but has added greatly to my feelings of confidence and optimism...

"I would like to inform you also that we have been planning and preparing, not only for the coming struggle, but also for post-war reconstruction. We can visualise the conditions that we shall find at home when the Anglo-Americans and [their allies are expelled from our Country. We have, therefore, set up a Reconstruction Department at our headquarters, where the problems of post-war reconstruction are being studied. People are now being trained for work of rapid reconstruction within India, simultaneously with the progress of military operations. In short, we are not leaving anything undone in our preparation for the coming fight for freedom and for the task that we shall have to undertake thereafter.

"It would naturally have been the best thing if a Government had been constituted inside India, and if that Government had launched the last struggle for liberty. But things being what they are in India, and all the known and recognised leaders being in prison, it is hopeless to expect the formation of a Provisional Government within the frontiers of India. It is equally hopeless to expect the last fight for freedom to be organised or initiated within the Country. It is consequently for the Indians in East Asia to undertake this solemn task.

"There is not the slightest doubt in our

minds that when we cross the Indian frontier with our Army and hoist our National Flag on Indian soil, the real revolution will break out within the country—the revolution that will ultimately bring about the end of British rule in India...

“The creation of a National Army has lent reality and seriousness to the whole Independence Movement in East Asia. If this Army had not been organised, the Independence League in East Asia would have been a mere propaganda organ. With the creation of the National Army, it became possible as well as necessary, to set up a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India). The Government is born out of the Independence League for the purpose of launching and directing the final struggle for India’s freedom...

“In setting up this Provisional Government we are, on the one hand, meeting the exigencies of the Indian situation, and are, on the other, following in the footsteps of history. In recent times, the Irish people set up their Provisional Government in 1916. The Czechs did the same during the last World War. The Turks, under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal, set up their Provisional Government in Anatolia...”

On October 22, 1943 Netaji opened the

Rani of Jhansi Training Camp for the Women's Section of the Indian National Army, and after hoisting the National flag, he spoke :

“Sisters! The opening of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment Training Camp is an important landmark in the progress of our Movement in East Asia. We are engaged in the great task of regenerating our Nation. And it is only in the fitness of things that there should be a stir of New Life among our women-folk. . .

“Our past has been a great and glorious one. India could not have produced a heroine like the Rani of Jhansi if she did not have a glorious tradition. In the same way as we have figures like Maitreyi in India's ancient days, we have the inspiring examples of Ahalyabai of Maharashtra, Rani Bhawani of Bengal, Razia Begum and Noor Jahan, who were shining administrators in recent historic times prior to British rule in India. I have every confidence in the fertility of the Indian soil. I am confident that India, as in the past, will surely produce the best flowers of Indian womanhood. . .

“I may at this juncture say a few words about the Rani of Jhansi. When the Rani of Jhansi started her fight, her age was only twenty. You can easily imagine what it meant

for a girl of twenty to ride a horse, and wield her sword in open battle. You can easily realise what courage and spirit she must have had. The English Commander who fought against her said that 'she was the best and bravest of rebels'. First she fought from the Jhansi Fort, and when the fort was besieged, she escaped with a party to Kalpi from where she put up a fight. When she had to retreat from this battlefront, she made an alliance with Tantia Topi, attacked and captured Gwalior Fort, and using that Fort as the base she continued the battle, and in this last and great battle she died fighting.

“Unfortunately, Jhansi Rani was defeated. It was not her defeat; it was the defeat of India. She died, but her spirit can never die. India can once again produce Jhansi Ranis and march on to victory.”

After the establishment of the Provisional Government the Council of ministers, on October 23, 1943, passed the resolution that “the Provisional Government of Azad Hind declares war on Britain and the U. S. A.” A special appeal for funds was, thereafter issued by Netaji to Indian merchants of East Asia who met him at Jalan and Besar Stadium in Singapore on October 26, 1943. He spoke :

“Look at those who have volunteered to

join the Indian National Army and who are now getting the necessary training. They do not know how many of them would live to see India free. They are getting ready with the one thought of shedding their last drop of blood. They are getting ready to go to a free India or to die on the way. There is no programme of retreat for them...

"When the I. N. A. is getting trained either to march to victory or to spill its last drop of blood on the way, the rich people are asking me whether total mobilisation means ten per cent. or five per cent. of their riches. I would ask these people who are speaking of percentages whether we can tell our soldiers to fight and spill only ten per cent. of their blood and save the rest...

"The poor classes have been coming forward voluntarily and with enthusiastic spirit to offer everything that they have. Poorer class Indians like watchmen, washermen, barbers, petty shopkeepers and gawalas have come forward with all that they have. And in addition to that some of them have also offered to become volunteers...

"Some of these poor people came to me, and not only did they give all the cash they had in their pockets, but went further and gave me their Savings Bank books, which

represent their lives' savings. Are there not rich men among the Indians in Malaya who can come forward and say in the same spirit: 'Here is my Bank book for the cause of Indian Independence'?...

"Indians as a nation believe in the ideal of self-sacrifice. Among the Hindus we have the ideal of the Sanyasins and the Muslims have the way of the Fakirs. Can there be a greater cause, a nobler cause and a holier cause than that of liberating 38 crores of human souls? My first request to Malaya is for 10 crores of rupees, which would be approximately 10 per cent. of the value of Indian possessions in Malaya."

As a result of this appeal one crore and thirty-lakh dollars were collected within 24 hours time.

In connection with the formation of the Provisional Government of Free India in Singapore Netaji issued the following statement on October 28, 1943 :

"With the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, the second dream of my political life has been fulfilled,—the first being the organisation of a national revolutionary Army. Only one more dream now remains to be fulfilled, namely to fight and win

our freedom... This declaration of war is not a propaganda stunt. We shall prove by our actions that we mean what we say. I, for one, would never have been a party to such a decision, if I had not been confident of putting that decision into practice."

And then he issued his famous Order of the Day:

"There, there in the distance—beyond that river, beyond those hills, lies the promised land, the soil from which we sprang—the land to which we shall now return.

"Hark! India is calling, India's metropolis Delhi is calling, three hundred and eighty-eight millions of our countrymen are calling. Blood is calling to blood.

"Get up, we have no time to lose. Take up your arms. There, in front of you is the road that our pioneers have built. We shall march along that road. We shall carve our way through the enemy's ranks, or if God wills, we shall die a martyr's death.

"And in our last sleep we shall kiss the road that will bring our Army to Delhi. The road to Delhi is the road to Freedom. 'CHALO DELHI'."

III

THE AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT

On taking over the Supreme Command of the Indian National Army, Netaji declared that his objective was the achievement of Independence of India. His words were: "In the interests of the Indian Independence movement I have taken over the direct command of our Army from this day. This is a matter of joy and pride to me, because for an Indian there can be no greater honour than to be Commander of India's Army of Liberation. The Azad Hind Fauj has a vital role to play. To fulfil this role we must weld ourselves into an army that will have only one goal—the freedom of India—and only one will—to do or die in the cause of India's freedom".

There was no difference between this objective of Netaji and that of Mahatma Gandhi. Their aim was the same—freedom, but the methods of approach were different. "While wholeheartedly agreeing that non-violence is the finest method yet devised by man to fight for his ideals", says an account, "it must be remembered in Gandhiji's own words, that *'violence is better than cowardice'*. In the storm-centres of violence where over-

whelming forces had been massed, these Indian men and women gave expression to the courage in their hearts in the way best available to them. They were like Arjuna, who fought on the battle-field of Kurukshetra with all his skill, without hatred but with a single hearted loyalty to his righteous cause. The Law will pronounce a verdict and individual deeds will pass into the cumulative events of the age. But history, in its final verdict will lay bare the hearts of these men and women and record the over-flowing, uncalculating, if mistaken, abunden with which its sons and daughters worshipped their great Mother India from afar”.

And thus in the words of Mr. J. P. Mitter, “Subhas Chandra Bose took a leaf out of history and made the supreme decision to make a bold bid to achieve the dream of his life—freedom of India. Subhas’s grand passion in life had been love for his country. Imperialism in adversity was his opportunity. England was fighting, with her back to the wall, a seemingly lost war. She professed to fight for the liberation of oppressed countries, but she gave no assurance of any real intention to release her iron grip on India.”

Almost immediately on his arrival in the South-East Asia Subhas Chandra Bose made the Indian Independence League as the executive

of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and in June 1944 in Malaya alone 2,30,000 persons took a written Oath of Allegiance to the Government. The Oath was :

- “ 1. I hereby voluntarily and of my own free will join and enlist myself in the Civil Volunteers Organisation of the Indian Independence League.
2. I solemnly and sincerely dedicate myself to India and hereby pledge my life for her freedom. I will serve India and the Indian Independence Movement to my fullest capacity even at the risk of my life.
3. In serving the country, I shall seek no personal advantage for myself.
4. I will regard all Indians as my brothers and sisters without distinction of religion, language or territory.
5. I will faithfully and without hesitation obey and carry out all orders and instructions given to me by the Indian Independence League and I will carry out all just and lawful commands of my superior officers under whom I may be required to serve from time to time.”

There were some 20 to 30 lakhs of Indians in the South-East Asia at that time and a vast majority of them were anxious to come under the protection of a strong and organised power which should protect their

honour and property in those warlike conditions. This the Azad Hind Government admirably answered. It was an independent Government established on a foreign soil with the object of firstly protecting Indian lives and property in the South-East Asia and secondly liberating India by organising a strong military attack after welding together the entire Indian community in the Far East. In the circumstances, the Provisional Government of Azad Hind was formed on the 21st October, 1943 with its headquarters in Singapore. These were shifted to Rangoon on January 7, 1944 making Singapore as the Rear Headquarters to supervise the activities in Java, Samatra, Borneo and Malaya.

The Indian Independence League was retained for doing the relief work among the Indian community in these countries. It had 24 branches in Thailand, 70 branches in Malaya and 100 branches in Burma, besides having several active branches all over Java, Sumatra, Celebes, Borneo, the Philippines, China, Manchukuo and Japan, and later on even in Andamans. In Malaya the League helped the distressed Indian Labourers who had been badly hit by war. It supplied free food, medicines and clothes to all deserving people. It also cleared 2,000 acres of jungle-land in Malaya for colonising distressed Indians coming from war zones. In Thailand and Burma it

established well-equipped hospitals and free dispensaries. Another important service rendered by the League was the establishment of schools for Indian children in the South-East Asia. In Burma alone it was running 65 Indian schools.

The Azad Hind Government owned clearly defined territories independent of external control and exercised 'undisputed and exclusive control over all persons and things within the territory occupied by it.'

"It would be a slander to say that the Provisional Government was a puppet government", says Mr. J. P. Mitter in his admirable article entitled 'Subhas Bose. The Provisional Government of Free India and Indian National Army'. "It received no financial assistance from the Japanese Government or from any one else. It obtained its funds from the taxation of its own subjects all over the Far East. The method of taxation was that a Committee of businessmen used to estimate the capital of every Indian, and 10 per cent. was taken by way of tax. Convenient instalments were allowed." The tax was levied only upon the Indian residents of the South-East Asia. There were some Indian residents who declared themselves to be subjects of the Burma Government. They were therefore excluded from payment of the tax, and asked only for such contributions

that they could voluntarily make to the Azad Hind Government fund. From voluntary contributions made by the people of Burma alone the Azad Hind Government got 8 lakhs of rupees in cash and 3 crores and 40 lakhs worth supplies. In this way other East Asiatic countries as well contributed about 51 crores to this Government. In all some 20 crores of rupees were donated to it, out of which was maintained the civil government and the Indian National Army.

Quite a number of cases have come to record which prove amply that Indians in those areas lavishly donated to the Azad Hind Government fund. On July 9, 1943 Netaji presented the *Sevak-i-Hind* medal to a Muslim multi-millionaire of Rangoon who had given away all his property, estate and wealth amounting to about a crore of rupees to the Indian Independence League. Again in a public meeting held on August 21, 1944 Netaji awarded the same medal to Shrimati Hiraben Betani who had given away 13 of her gold necklaces costing rupees 1,50,000 to the Netaji fund. Another huge donation was made by a Punjabi youngman on the occasion of the Independence Day celebrations on January 26, 1944 in Rangoon. The story is: "At the beginning of the meeting Netaji was garlanded. He had wound the garland of flowers round his hand as he spoke. When he finished his

stirring speech enthusiasm was at fever-heat. Then an idea struck him. He asked if anybody was ready to buy the garland; the money he would receive would go to the Fauj funds.

“The first bid was one lakh of rupees. In a few minutes the figure swelled. One lakh—one lakh and a half—three lakhs—four—four and a quarter—five—six—seven lakhs !

“A young Panjabi youth had been the first bidder. When the figure reached four and a quarter, he shouted five. When the final bid of seven lakhs was being announced, he looked vexed and intent on an inner struggle. As the garland was about to be declared sold, he jumped up and rushed to the dais: ‘I give all my wealth—all that I have—every pie that I own,’ he shouted. Subhas Babu caught the trembling youth by both his hands. He said: ‘Done—the garland is yours. Patriotic men like you deserve the crown of glory our Fauj shall win.’

“But the youth had no ears for anything. He had clutched the garland and was pressing it to his eyes and his heart. He declared: ‘Now I am freed from earthly possessions, I seek membership of the Fauj. I offer my life to the cause of our country’s freedom.’

“This miracle in a youth of the idle rich class ! Our Netaji had really inspired him.

That garland of flowers must be dry by now. The flowers must have wilted and withered and the perfume of death must have surrounded the garland. And possibly the fate of the flowers will be the fate of this youth tomorrow. But he was happy and radiant, a glow lighted his eyes as he walked away with it."

Again on January 23, 1945, the people of Burma celebrated the birthday of Netaji. The function was held at the Jubilee Hall Rangoon, where Netaji also attended. Netaji, who had previously been weighed against gold four times by the Indians, Malaysians and the Burmese, was on that occasion presented with a crown of gold studded with diamonds and other precious stones, by a Burmese merchant, who implored him to wear the crown and become the duly crowned King of Burma, Malaya and India, but Netaji refused to wear the crown, stating that "unless and until India was freed, he was not prepared to accept or wear the crown. "Such was the popularity of Netaji", says an account that "the people were ready to sacrifice their lives and all their worldly belongings at his feet. Netaji had no other worry or anxiety but of the future of his country. The picture of India, his Motherland, was always before his eyes. He had no other ambition but to liberate India from the foreign domination and raise its status...He used to work as if he were not an ordinary human

being, but a superman. His power of endurance was amazing and people used to think that he had been working with so much energy only under the spell of some divine inspiration. He used to snatch little rest or sleep only for three hours in 24 hours. He was very regular and disciplined in his daily routine."

The money collected by the Azad Hind Government was kept in its own bank known as the Azad Hind Bank. It received donations in cash and kind which included foodstuffs, metalware and all such things that could be of use to the Indian National Army. The returns of donations received in November, 1943 showed 53,43,956 dollars in cash and 86,310 dollars in jewellery, etc. In July 1944 the total was 1,53,54,104 dollars.

The Azad Hind Bank was established in Rangoon in April 1944. Mr. Dina Nath, who was one of the Directors of this Bank states that "the Provisional Government of Azad Hind had also decided to finance industry and commerce in the territories under its jurisdiction. The Bank had an authorized capital of 50 lakhs of rupees and a paid-up capital of 25 lakhs of rupees, the rupee being equivalent to the Japanese dollar. More capital was not encouraged as investment facilities were limited. The transactions of the Bank extended from China to all the countries in South-East

Asia, where the Azad Hind Government had been purchasing goods and equipment.

“The Azad Hind currency, which was issued in various denominations, bore the signatures of Netaji Subhas Bose on one side and the picture of the Taj Mahal on the other. The bank had a Board of seven directors with Mr. S. A. Ayer, Propaganda Minister of the Azad Hind Government, as Chairman. Branches of the Bank in Singapore, Nicobar and the Andamans were contemplated.

“For the purpose of financing the Indian National Army, a separate committee, called Netaji Fund Committee, was set up. Voluntary donations for this fund were received from Indians in South-East Asiatic countries.”

Thus within a brief span of time the Azad Hind Government was established on quite sound financial basis. It had resources of some 20 crores of rupees in addition to the produce of Ziawadi area. Ziawadi ‘was a property, about 50 square miles in area, with 15,000 inhabitants who were Indians. It had on it a sugar factory and various other means of production, agricultural or otherwise, and every branch of Administration of that territory was carried out by men appointed by the Indian National Army and belonging to the Azad Hind Dal.’

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind had nineteen different departments for administration work. Subhas Chandra Bose was the Head of the State and Prime Minister. The following were some of the important departments :

(1) War, (2) Foreign Affairs, (3) Finance, (4) Supply, (5) Recruitment and Training, (6) Publicity and Propaganda, (7) Women's Organisation, (8) Audit, (9) Education, (10) Public Works, (11) Health & Public Welfare, (12) Law and Order, (13) Judicature, (14) Burma Branch, (15) Post-War planning and Reconstruction.

The Azad Hind Dal was specially organised by the Government with the object of preparing civilians for the administration of the territories liberated by the Indian National Army. It was an institution where selected people were taken in and trained in civil administration in Singapore. The training centre was afterwards shifted to Rangoon.

Education of children in general was another important feature of the Azad Hind Government. Education was imparted on nationalistic lines. The curriculum consisted of Indian National History; Lives of great Indian leaders like Gandhi, Tilak, C. R. Das ;

Hindustani language; Indian Geography; Music and National Songs; Nature study; Handwork and Drawing; Arithmetic; Moral and Mental training, and Hygiene. Besides the students were given practical Training in certain useful industrial arts like soap-making ink-making, electroplating, water purifying, repairing articles of common use like the bicycle, gramophone, clock etc.; Gardening, physical-training, and elementary infantry training were also part and parcel of the education. In the evenings two hours were devoted by every school for teaching adults.

A children's force was also being trained by the Azad Hind Government. It was known as '*Balak Sena*'. It was probably something like the Boy Scouts Movement, but details about it are lacking.

The Propaganda and Publicity Department of the Azad Hind Government was equally important. It possessed four Radio Stations for propaganda work. Besides a daily paper '*Purna Swaraj*', and a weekly magazine '*Azad Hind*' were issued under its authority. The Government also issued a Civil Gazette of its own from time to time.

The Azad Hind Government is reported to have prepared its own postal stamps. Under the caption "Imphal Stamp that failed" the

Stamp Collecting, a London magazine in its issue of November 19, 1945 writes :

“So confident were the Japs that they would occupy Imphal, when they invaded Southern Assam that they actually prepared a special issue of stamps for use there. Needless to say these stamps failed to materialise, but our correspondent, Flying Officer, T.A. Broomhead, informs us that he had seen proof impressions in the hands of the man who was responsible for the printing (in Rangoon). Two denominations appear to have been prepared, viz., 3 pice plum and 1 anna red, both in the same design and roughly perforated $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ (approx). The subject of the vignette (illustrated) is the old Mogul Fortress at Old Delhi accompanied by the slogan “On to Delhi”. Bi-lingual inscription reads “PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF FREE INDIA”. When it became evident that the Imphal stamps would not be required, the dies were destroyed and the bulk supply of sheets printed in readiness was burnt with the exception of a small quantity salvaged by the printer”. Thus the Provisional Government of Free India “had got prepared, issued or were about to issue postal stamps of that character.”

The Azad Hind Government or the Provisional Government of Free India was recognised as a Free Government by the following powers :

Germany, Italy, Japan, Croatia, Manchuria, the Philippines, the Nanking Government, Siam, Burma, and the Irish Free State.

On February 17, 1944 at the Far Eastern Asiatic Conference held at Tokyo, the Andamans and Nicobar Islands were ceded by the Japanese to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Accordingly Netaji sent Colonel Loganadan as Chief Commissioner of the Islands, where with due ceremony held at the Indian Independence League Headquarters at Port Blair, the Andamans and Nicobars were formally handed over to him.

Next, the Japanese Government also ceded to the Azad Hind Government the Ziawadi territory, and also agreed to hand over any other areas on the Indian soil which the Japanese forces acquired. Thus the Azad Hind Government "administered for a period of four to six months the Manipur and Vishnupur areas" as well. In this connection, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai stated in his Defence Statement of the I. N. A. case: "By right of conquest it (Japan) was in a position to dispose as it liked of the whole or any portion of any territory and as the witness told you clearly, by reason of the agreement between the Provisional Government and the Nippon Government, this territory was handed over as a part of the liberated territory to the I. N. A. and;

the Azad Hind Dal...It has been proved beyond question...that as soon as the I. N. A. crossed the borders of Burma into India a proclamation was issued in two parts, one signed by the Head of the Indian State and the other signed by General Kawabe under the orders of the South Eastern Command. In that it was distinctly stated that any part of the Indian territory which would be acquired by conquest or otherwise by the Japanese Army would be handed over to the I. N. A. for the purpose of forming part of the liberated territory and to be administered by them. That is the history of the ceding."

The Japanese also sent an Ambassador to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind at Rangoon. He arrived in Rangoon without letters of credit or his credentials, and sought Netaji's audience. It mattered little, as he stated his credentials were to follow him, but Netaji refused to see him without having examined his papers of introduction Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The had according to the desires back his home Government for which were accordingly presented to the Japanese Emperor, at Rangoon. In this connection "The sending Government in required, actually sent letter the fact that it reached or did

not affect the issue ; at all events it completely cured such defect or deficiency as there was in the procedure. And in point of fact I ask the Court to hold that there was a duly appointed Minister, which is all that arises here. The reason why we brought in the evidence was among other things that the Provisional Government of Azad Hind was a properly organized Government, and accepted; and the acceptance does not require necessarily the sending of an envoy, or an ambassador, or a minister, whatever the position or the relation between the Governments may be."

Thus, the Azad Hind Government, instead of being an instrument in the hands of the Japanese Government, was in fact using the latter as means for liberating India. According to their mutual agreement all liberated parts of India were to be handed over to the I. N. A., and the Japanese did in fact cede to the Azad Hind Government the Andamans and Nicobar, the Ziawadi, and Manipur and Vishnupur areas covering about 15,000 square miles. Thus, the Azad Hind Government possessed all the necessary features of an independent, sovereign state, and had a clear and well-defined objective which was nothing else than the liberation of India through the Indian National Army, and the establishment of freedom and liberty in this country.

VI

THE CHARGE OF IMMORTALS

The Indian National Army which during the last few months has captured the imagination of every person in this country, was voluntary army, organized, trained and officered solely by Indians. It had a separate General staff and Headquarters. It fought under a Commander of its own, had distinctive uniforms, and followed the rules of war.

The first Indian National Army was formed almost immediately after the fall of Singapore in February, 1942. One of the main reasons why men and officers of the Indian Army joined the I. N. A., is given by Captain Arshad as under :

“... in the Indian Army there had been distinction between the British officers and the Indian commissioned officers. The Indian commissioned officers had not been treated as well as our English comrades or brother officers. We also felt that if the senior officers present in Singapore or in Malaya did not join the I. N. A. it was quite possible that the Japanese would exploit the Indian prisoners of war,

because then the Indian prisoners of war would be split up into small groups. Some people would join and some would not, and the Japanese would take advantage of that and enrol people from amongst the prisoners of war who would be willing to do any service for them. We felt that that would be a disgrace to Indians. We agreed that if the senior officers joined the I.N.A. and formed a strong party and organised the I.N.A. as a regular army and fought the Japanese on every point regarding the Army, we would have a far stronger position with the Japanese than otherwise. We also felt that if we created an army of our own, we may be able to establish a certain amount of standing with the Japanese, and by doing that we may be able to stop the Japanese from committing any atrocities on the Indians in Malaya. We had seen what the Japanese were doing to the Chinese and Anglo-Indians and the Malaysians. They were not treating them very well. Certain atrocities had been committed on the Chinese and also on the Eurasian community, and we thought that if the Indians refused to join the I.N.A. it was quite possible that the whole of the Indian community in Singapore or in Malaya might suffer. So we had a discussion on all these points. But then arose the question that if we did join the Indian National Army, what would be the reaction of our people in India ?”



Lieut-Colonel Lakshmi
Commander, Rani of Jhansi Regiment

Thus, from the very beginning there was a general feeling that the I.N.A. should not be subordinated to the Japanese forces. And when in December 1942 the Japanese wanted to take away those of the Indian Prisoners of War who had not joined the I.N.A., Captain Mohan Singh felt that the Japanese were not keeping their words, and he refused to hand over those persons. This along with reasons specified in a previous section of the book led to the suspension of the first I.N.A. until July 1943 when Subhas Chandra Bose took up the supreme command of the Army and re-constructed it on proper lines without being subordinated to the Japanese. The I.N.A. then established with the Japanese Army as Allies actuated by the main motive of securing the freedom of India. The members of the I.N.A. were clearly told that "if and when we fight with our Allies, the Japanese nation, it should not happen that we remain as second rate in the fight and thus disgrace our nation. When we reach India we shall meet Indian men and women, and those (women) who are elders to us we should consider them as mothers and those who are younger we should consider them as our daughters and sisters, and if anybody will not obey these instructions he will be shot dead; and if and when India is freed and the Japanese who are now helping us tried to subdue us, we shall even fight them... and if a Japanese gives you one slap, you give

him three in return, because our Government is parallel to their Japanese Government, and we are in no way subservient to them, and that when we reach India, if we notice any Japanese maltreating an Indian lady, he should be warned by word of mouth not to do so, but if he continued to do so, we were at liberty to use force and even shoot him in order to prevent it, because the fight which we are making now is for the freedom and well-being of India and not for the benefit of the Japanese.”

Thus the Indian National Army was completely independent of the Japanese control save in unified command on occasions of higher strategy, which, of course, was unavoidable as the Japanese had better knowledge of the art of war.

The Indian National Army was very well-constituted and fully organized in every sense of the word. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was the Supreme Commander, who was assisted by a War Council consisting of the following eleven members :

1. Col. J. K. Bhonsle.
2. Col. M. Z. Kiani.
3. Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir.
4. Lt. Col. Aziz Ahmad Khan.
5. Lt. Col. Habib-ur-Rehman.

6. Lt. Col. Gulzara Singh.
7. Sri N. Raghavan
8. Sri S. A. Ayer.
9. Sri Parmanand.
10. Col. A. C. Chatterji, Secretary.
11. Sri A. Yellappa, Co-opted Member.

The Defence Department which was under the charge of Col. J. K. Bhonsle consisted of the following personnel :

1. 'G' Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz Khan, C.G.S.
2. Chief Administrator-Lt. Colonel A. D. Loganadan.
3. D. P. M.-Major Abdur Rashid.
4. Military Secretary-Major P. K. Sahgal.
5. Finance-Captain Krishna Murti.
6. O. T. S. Lt. Col.-Habib-ur-Rehman.
7. Reinforcements-Major Mata-ul-Mulk.
8. 'A'-Major C. J. Stracy.
9. Legal and Judicial-Captain D. C. Nag.
10. 'Q'-Major K. P. Thimaya.
11. D. M. S.-Captain S. N. Dey.
12. Establishment-Lt. D. C. Dutta.
13. Enlightenment Culture-Major A. D. Jahangir.

According to a document of April 17, 1943, the Army was under the command of Lt. Col. M. Z. Kiani, and consisted of the following branches :

- (1) General Staff Branch :—
 - (a) Operations Plans
 - (b) Special Duties Branch.
 - (c) Training Branch.
- (2) A/Q Branch.
- (3) Medical Branch :—
 - (a) Base Hospitals.
 - (b) Medical Aid Parties.
- (4) "A" Branch :—
 - (a) Establishment.
 - (b) Employment Planning.
- (5) "O" Branch :—
 - (a) Ordnance (i) Technical, (ii) Non-Technical.
 - (b) Supply and Transport.

The composition of the Indian National Army was as under :—

- (1) Headquarters (composition as above).
- (2) I Hind Field Group under the command of Lt.-Col. S. M. Hussain.
- (3) Guerrilla Regiments consisting of :—
 - (a) Bose Brigade under Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz Khan.

- (b) Gandhi Brigade under Lt. Col. I. J. Kiani *
- (c) Azad Brigade under Major Gulzara Singh.
- (d) Nehru Brigade under Lt. Col. Aziz Ahmad Khan.
- (4) Intelligence Group under Major S. A. Malik.
- (5) Bahadur Group under Lt. Col. Burhan-ud-Din.

The Army consisted of three Divisions. No. 1 incorporated the Guerrilla Regiments; No. 2 composed partly of Indian Military prisoners of war and partly of civilians; and No. 3 composed of civilians mostly recruited by the Indian Independence League in Malaya.

Various figures are given regarding the strength of the Indian National Army, but the official total strength was in the tune of 40,000 heads. Recruits were drawn both from the Indian prisoners of war and from the Indian civilians of the South-East Asia. The troops were dressed in Khaki like British Indian troops and were organized on lines similar to those of the British Indian Army. Officers and men of the I. N. A. wore a badge about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length and 1 inch in width on the left side of the forage cap. On the top of the badge were

inscribed the words "I. N. A." with a map of India in the centre. At the bottom of the badge were inscribed in Roman script : "Ittifaq ; Etmad and Qurbani" meaning Unity, Confidence and Sacrifice. They also used to wear another badge on the right side of their uniform. It was 1 inch by 1 inch in size, and was marked with the tri-colour map of India. A locket-sized badge bearing a miniature of Netaji was worn on the left side of the uniform by all members of the I. N. A.

Officers and men of the various Guerrilla Brigades had badges of different colours for the sake of distinction. Each Brigade was assigned a particular colour for the badge in the following order :

1. Bose Brigade—Red and green
2. Gandhi Brigade—Green
3. Nehru Brigade—Brown
4. Azad Brigade—White.

Each battalion was assigned the colour identical to that of its Brigade for the purpose of the badges, but the men had to wear them according to the undermentioned order of their shapes :

- No. 1 Battalion—Round
- No. 2 Battalion—Triangular
- No. 3 Battalion—Square.

The officers of the I.N.A. had the following distinguishing marks on their shoulder-straps :

Colonel—Golden star between two bars, and red tap on collar supporting a golden bar on either side.

Captain—Three blue bars.

Lieutenant—Two blue bars.

Sub-Lieutenant—One blue bar.

Subordinate officers—no bar.

The Azad Hind Government had aimed to recruit and train up 300,000 men pledged to fight for India. The said Government had collected sufficient money for the purpose and opened four training centres where 7,000 soldiers could be trained at one time. For officers there were Training Centres at Singapore and Rangoon from where some 1500 cadets graduated during the course of the war.

In the Indian National Army there was no difference between a man and a man. All were treated on the same footing irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Their only ambition was to liberate India from the foreign domination. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were all one for the achievement of this aim. They ate from one kitchen, in common plates, drank from common mugs, all officers and common soldiers — Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. They kept the

picture of India, their common Motherland always before their eyes, and saluted with "JAI HIND" the national Tricolour. That was the spirit of the I. N. A.

The Women's Organization of the I. N. A. was also an important wing of the Fauj. A women's Regiment was raised in July, 1943 under the command of Captain Mrs. Laxmi Sawaminathan. The members of this Regiment were drawn from the Indian civilian population of the South-East Asia. The Regiment was named after the famous Rani of Jhansi, who had died fighting bravely against the British forces in 1857, and consisted of 856 women trained for active service. Mrs. Laxmi as the Captain of the Regiment played a unique part in inspiring and organising the women into Red Cross units, relief squads, ambulance workers and emergency nurses.

Officers and men of the Indian National Army were regularly paid in cash by the Government of Azad Hind besides being provided with food, clothing, etc. They were distinctly told that since the Fauj was fighting for the freedom of their Motherland, each member thereof had to make a sacrifice, physically and materially. The rates of pay were therefore fixed as under :

Colonel Rs. 400 ; Major Rs. 180 ; Captain Rs. 125 ; Lieutenants Rs. 80 per mensem.

The Indian National Army went into action on February 4, 1944. The distribution of the forces was :

1. Assam Front—One Division
2. Rangoon „ —One Division
3. Malaya „ —One Division.

Half the soldiers in these Divisions were the Indian prisoners of war and the other half were Indian civilian volunteers. There was no Japanese soldier or officer in them. Each of these Divisions had four brigades. The first Division which fought in Imphal and in the Arakan comprised of the following brigades:

1. Subhas Brigade : Commanding Col. Shah Nawaz Khan, 3,200 men.
2. Gandhi Brigade : Commanding Col. I. Z. Kiani, 2800 men.
3. Azad Brigade : Commanding Col. Gulzara Singh, 2800 men.
4. Nehru Brigade : Commanding Col. G. S. Dhillon, 3000 men.

The Indian National Army, in spite of serious handicaps, had a very good start. It

had neither any planes nor any lorries for transport of men and material. Its soldiers had to carry everything—kits, munition, supplies—for themselves. Against them the British conducted their military operations at Imphal and Kohima under the Allied Command treating them as part of the total war efforts the Allied power.

The I. N. A., with the Japanese help soon surrounded Imphal. On February 9, 1944, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose issued a Special Order of the Day :

“The eyes of the whole world are focused on the Arakan Front, where events of far reaching consequences are taking place today. The glorious and brilliant actions of the brave units of Azad Hind Fauj working in close concert with the forces of the Imperial Nippon Army, have helped to foil all attempts by the Anglo-American forces to start counter-offensive in this sector.

“I am sure that the brave deeds of our comrades on the Arakan Front will be a great inspiration to all the officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj wherever they may be stationed at the present moment. Our long awaited march to Delhi has begun and with grim determination we shall continue that march until the tricolour National Flag that is flying over

the Arakan mountains is hoisted over the Vice-regal Lodge and until we hold our victory parade at the ancient Red Fortress of Delhi.

“Comrades, officers and men of India’s Army of Liberation : Let there be one solemn resolve in your hearts—‘Either Liberty or death.’ And let there be but one slogan on your lips : ‘Onward to Delhi.’ The road to Delhi is the road to freedom. Victory will certainly be ours.”

On March 18, 1944 the I.N.A. captured Tiddim and crossed the Indo-Burma Frontier for the first time. The Japanese armies joined them in the plains of Imphal. Their allied forces first cut off the road to Dinapur and thereafter captured Bishenpur and Kohima. The Japanese G.O.C. on the North Burma Front, General Moto Cuchi at this juncture promised full aid to the advancing armies of the I.N.A., and it appeared that the Azad Hind Forces would sweep over India with tremendous speed. But the British rushed up reinforcements by air and land and retook Kohima. The I.N.A. on the other hand soon ran short of its supplies. The Japanese could not keep their promise, and on the contrary started ill-treating I.N.A. soldiers. Shah Nawaz Khan writes in his Diary on March 30, 1944 that “the Japanese are using I.N.A. Crack Regiment as labourers. I am going to

Haka today to see Kimewari in this connection. I wonder what is going to be the outcome. Left Falam at 15,00 hours for Haka."

In the circumstances the I.N.A. had to lift the siege of Imphal. On June 27, Shah Nawaz Khan writes: "My men did not receive any rations. 4 Gharwallis have died of starvation. I and Ram Sarup have approached Hikari Kikan to do something about the rations. They seem NOT to take the least notice of it. I do not know what is the idea behind this deliberate starvation of my men."

This state of affairs continued and Shah Nawaz Khan writes on July 15: "Due to starvation men are dying like flies. Some committing suicide. Japanese are giving no help". On August 3, in the absence of any money or supplies of food-stuffs, Shah Nawaz Khan got a suggestion from the Japanese that his sick men at Teraun should commit suicide. In the meantime, since the monsoons had set in, Netaji issued orders for the postponement of operations. In his Special Order of the Day issued on August 14, 1944 Netaji writes:

"In the middle of March this year, advanced units of the Azad Hind Fauj, fighting shoulder to shoulder with their valiant allies, the Imperial Nippon Forces, crossed the Indo-Burma border and the fight for India's

liberation thereupon commenced on Indian soil.

“The British authorities, by ruthlessly exploiting India for over a century and bringing foreign soldiers to fight their battles for them, had managed to put up a mighty force against us. After crossing the Indo-Burma border, our forces inspired by the righteousness of our cause, encountered these numerically superior and better equipped but heterogenous and disunited forces of the enemy and defeated them in every battle.

“Our units, with their better training and discipline and unshakable determination to do or die on the path of India’s freedom, soon established their superiority over the enemy whose morale deteriorated with each defeat. Fighting under the most trying conditions, our officers and men displayed such courage and heroism that they have earned the praise of every body. With their blood and sacrifice, these heroes have established traditions which the future soldiers of Free India ~~shall have~~ to uphold.

“All preparations h
and the stage had been set
on Imphal when torrenti
and to carry Imphal by an
a practical impossibility.

“Handicapped by the elements, we were forced to postpone our offensive. After the postponement of the offensive, it was found disadvantageous for our troops to continue to hold the line that we then had. For securing a more favourable defensive position, it was considered advisable to withdraw our troops. In accordance with this decision, our troops have withdrawn to a more favourable defensive position. We shall now utilise the period in full in completing our preparations, so that with the advent of better weather, we may be in a position to resume our offensive ... As soon as all our preparations are complete, we shall launch a mighty offensive against our enemies once again. With the superior fighting qualities, dauntless courage and unshakable devotion to duty of our officers and men, victory shall surely be ours.

“May the souls of those heroes, who have fallen in this campaign inspire us to still nobler deeds of heroism and bravery in the next phase of India's War of Liberation. Jai Hind.”

The second campaign of the I.N.A. began in January 1945 when Netaji addressing his men at the Mingaladan Camp in Rangoon tried to infuse a spirit of enthusiasm and sacrifice amongst them.

He spoke :

“Last year the I.N.A. faced the enemy on the battld-field for the first time. The deeds of the I.N.A. were glorious : they were beyond any expectations and won the praise of both friend and foe. We dealt the enemy a crushing defeat wherever we fought him. Without being defeated we had, as a tactical move, to bring back our forces from the Imphal front due to bad weather and other handicaps.

“Now we have tried to overcome these difficulties. But everyone should remember that our army is a revolutionary army. We are not so-well equipped in man-power as our enemies are. Our enemies have decided that they will fight their first battle for the defence of India in Assam and they have made this area India's Stalingrad.

“This year will be the decisive year of the war. The fate of India's freedom will be decided near the hills of Imphal and on the plains of Chittagong. Last year some of our men joined the enemy. I do not want even a single man to go over to the enemy this time when we go to the front. Therefore, if anyone thinks that he is incapable of going to the front due to weakness or cowardice or for any other reason he should report to his regimental

Commander and arrangements will be made to keep him at the base.

“I do not wish to paint a very rosy picture to you. You will have to face hunger, thirst and other hardships and even death when you go to the front. Because the enemy has made the utmost preparations, we too shall have to mobilize all our resources.

“In addition to the present slogan of the I.N.A., namely ‘*Chalo Delhi*’, another slogan will be added from today, and that will be : ‘*Khoon, Khoon, Khoon*’. This means that we shall shed our blood for the freedom of 40 crores of people in India. Similarly, we shall shed the blood of the enemy for the same cause. The slogan for Indian civilians who are in the south will be : ‘*Karo sab nichawar, bano sab fakir*’ (sacrifice everything, become all paupers).”

The renewed campaign of the Indian National Army lasted from January to August 1945. The Subhas, Gandhi and Nehru Brigades fought bravely and suffered great losses to stem the tide of the British 14th Army into Burma. On the 1st March, 1945 the following units and formations of the I.N.A. were operating :

1. Advance Div. H.Qrs.
2. H. Q. No. 1 Inf. Regiment.

3. 2/1 Inf. Regiment.
4. H. Qrs. No. 2 Inf. Regiment.
5. 2/2 Inf. Regiment.
6. H. Qrs. No. 4 Guerrilla Regiment.
7. 2/4 Guerrilla Regiment.
8. No. 1 Anti-Tank Coy.
9. No. 2 A.B. O.D.
10. No. 2 M.E.S.
11. No. 2 Workshop.
12. P.O.L. Section.
13. No. 4 Engineer Coy.
14. Main Div. H. Qrs.
15. 1/1 Infantry Regiment.
16. 1/2 " "
17. 3/1 " "
18. 3/2 " "
19. 1/4 Guerrilla "
20. 3/4 " "
21. No. 2 Div. Signals.
22. No. 2 F.P.S.C.
23. Pt. Amn. Dump.
24. No. 2 S.I.S.
25. Medical Aid Party.
26. Dett. M.P.

But the advance of the 14th Army could not be checked without heavy reinforcements, supplies and air support. The Japanese air-power gave no assistance, and the lines of supplies were cut off. The result was starvation, death and devastation for the I.N.A.

Early in March the second Division of the I. N. A. under Shah Nawaz Khan, and the Nehru Guerrilla Brigade under Col. Dhillon started operations between Popa and Mandalay. From there the Japanese began to disappear leaving the I. N. A. alone in the field. But they did not in any way lose heart Col. Dhillon in his Intelligence Summary dated March 3, 1945 writes: "Nothing much happened during these days. Patrol activity from our side continued. Enemy tried to encircle the Guerilla party in the vicinity of Tibu, but failed. Our Patrols went up to Seiktien and Welaung and got information that enemy has gone towards Taungtha...Most of the civilians are pro-Americans as they are given rice, milk, cigarettes, P. T. shoes and clothes by the enemy. OYE parties had to pretend that they were on the Americans' side in order to get information from the civilians. It was also found out that the enemy was strong in medium and light tanks as well as carriers. Following form the enemy :

"Americans—Not much.

"Indians, Gurkhas, Negroes, Chinese and Kochins.

"One of our parties was very heavily bombed at a place about six miles from Popa in the Northerly direction."

To keep up the morale of the I. N. A. Netaji issued another Special Order of the Day on March 13, 1945. He wrote: "Comrades! As you all know, the positive achievement of the officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj last year on the field of battle and the victories that they scored over the enemy through their patriotism, bravery and self-sacrifice, were marred to some extent by the cowardice and treachery of a few officers and men. We were hoping that with the advent of the New Year all traces of cowardice and treachery would be wiped out, and that in this year's operations the Azad Hind Fauj would be able to put up an unsullied record of heroism and self-sacrifice. But that was not to be. The recent treachery of five officers of the H. Q. of the 2nd Division has come as an eye-opener to us that all is not well within our ranks and that the seeds of cowardice and treachery have yet to be wiped out. If we now succeed in exterminating cowardice and treachery once for all, this shameful and despicable incident may, through God's grace, ultimately prove to be a blessing in disguise. I am, therefore, determined to take all possible measures necessary for the purification of our Army. I am confident that in this I shall have your full and unstinted support.

"In order to destroy completely the germs of cowardice and treachery, the following measures will have to be adopted :

“1. Every member of the Azad Hind Fauj, officer, N. C. O. or Sepoy will, in future be entitled to arrest any other member of the Azad Hind Fauj, no matter what his rank may be, if he leaves in a cowardly manner or to shoot him if he acts in a treacherous manner.

“2. I am giving an opportunity to all members of the Azad Hind Fauj who may not feel inclined to work dutifully or fight courageously in future to leave the rank of the Azad Hind Fauj. This offer will be open for one week from the time of its communication.

“3. In addition to giving an opportunity to unwilling elements to leave voluntarily the ranks of the Azad Hind Fauj, I want to carry out thorough purge of our Army. During the course of this purge, all those will be removed against whom there is suspicion that they may fail us, or betray us, at the critical moment. In order to carry out this purge successfully I want your fullest co-operation and I want you, therefore, to give me and my trusted officers all available information about any cowardly or treacherous elements that may still exist in our Army.

“4. It will not be enough to carry out a thorough purge now. In future, also, vigilance will have to continue. It will, therefore, be the duty of every member of Azad Hind Fauj,

in future, to keep his eyes and ears open in order to detect in good time any tendency towards cowardice or treachery, In future if any member of the Azad Hind Fauj detects any tendency towards cowardice or treachery he should report at once, either orally or in writing either to me or to the officers who may be within reach. In other words, from now onwards and for all times, every member of the Azad Hind Fauj should regard himself as the custodian of the honour and reputation of the Azad Hind Fauj and of the Indian Nation.

“5. After the purge has been carried out and unwilling elements have been given an opportunity of leaving our Army, if there is any case of cowardice or treachery, the punishment will be death.

“6. In order to create within our army a moral bulwark against cowardice and treachery, we have to create an intense hatred against cowardice and treachery in any form. A strong feeling has to be created in the mind of every member of this army that for a member of a revolutionary army, there is no crime more heinous and despicable than to be a coward or a traitor. Instructions are being issued separately as to how we can create such an intense hate against cowardice and treachery so that there will be no more cowards or traitors within our ranks.

“7. After the purge has been carried out, every member of the Azad Hind Fauj will be required to renew his oath to fight on bravely and courageously until the emancipation of our dear Mother-land is achieved. Instructions regarding the form and manner of this oath will be issued separately.

“8. Special rewards will be given to those who give information regarding cowardly and treacherous elements or who arrest or shoot at the front cowardly and treacherous elements.”

This served as a powerful incentive to the men of the I.N.A., but the difficulties and privations on the front combined with the counter-propaganda of the British Indian forces attracted some of the officers and men of the Fauj who began to desert their companions. In this respect an interesting note appears in Col. P. K. Sahgal's Diary: “The three most salient features regarding these desertions from No. 546 unit are :—

“(a) All the officers who have deserted, had here to work most sincerely and (were) considered very outstanding. Specially noteworthy among them were Lt. Khazin Shah, Lt. Yasin Khan, Lt. Ganga Singh, 2/Lt. Chasin Singh, 2/Lt. Balwant Singh, S.O. Barfi Ram, S.O. Abdul Hakim, and Hav. Baldev

Singh. On many occasions these officers had proved their devotion to the cause, and fought bravely and I had no occasion whatsoever to doubt their loyalty.

“(b) None of the officers who have gone over, ever showed cowardice, and right upto the time they went over, they fought most courageously.

On the 2nd. when the enemy approached our positions, Lt. Yasin Khan personally manned a Machine Gun and opened fire on the enemy and throughout the action, under heavy enemy artillery fire, he was going from post to post keeping up the morale of the men. On the night of the 29th when my party had been ambushed, 2/Lt. Balwant Singh, S.O. Barfi Ram and Hav. Baldev Singh showed complete disregard for their personal Safety and fought most bravely...

“(c) Not a single person ever showed cowardice in the face of the enemy. Our positions were attacked by very superior numbers, but not a single person ever left his post. We, with small Units, attacked the enemy much superior in numbers and in armaments, but not a single soldier ever wavered. There was no desertion from a Unit as long as the Unit was in contact with the enemy, on the contrary, the Units fought with unrivalled determination and utmost bravery...

“After a very careful study of these points and the circumstances under which the unit fought, I am of the opinion that these desertions were mainly due to the following causes :

- “(i) Turkey’s alignment alongside the anti-axis powers has had a very adverse effect on certain Muslim Officers. In spite of our efforts to explain to them the circumstances under which Turkey has been forced to join the War, the officers feel that by fighting against powers that are allied with the Turks, they are being disloyal to Islam.
- “(ii) In the minds of a number of officers and men there is a lack of faith in our final victory. They are in their own minds convinced that the Anglo-Americans are going to win the war and it is futile to carry on the struggle.
- “(iii) In this particular operation, after the desertion of Lt. Yasin Khan and his companions, there was a general feeling among the officers and men of the Unit that it was useless to continue fighting against the enemy, so superior in numbers and armaments and helped by the traitors, who had

gone over to his side. Majority of these officers, under normal circumstances, would never have done anything treacherous, but finding themselves so overwhelmed, they did not have the moral strength to continue the struggle and decided to save themselves by going over to the enemy.

“Before I conclude this report, I feel it my duty to pay a tribute to the steadfastness, devotion to duty and bravery of those of the officers and men who fought most courageously and desperately against heavy odds and checked the enemy from penetrating our positions. Thinned in numbers, exhausted by hunger and thirst, weary both in mind and body, these brave soldiers of the A.H.F. (Azad Hind Fauj) tenaciously hung on to their posts until the arrival of the Nippon force...”

Fatigue, starvation and desertion of companions unnerved the veterans of the I.N.A. Their morale was running very low, quite on the verge of break-down. Col. Sahgal, therefore, issued a Special Order of the day to the officers and men of the H. A. F. No. 2 Division on the front which runs as follows :

“*Sathio* ! We have the privilege of fighting in the foremost ranks of A.H.F.; so it behoves

every one of us to be prepared to make the supreme sacrifice to uphold the honour and glory of Free India.

“Enemies of India have managed to cross over to the left bank of the Irrawadi and our valiant allies, the Nipponese, are fighting grimly to defeat and annihilate this enemy.

“Owing to the heavy losses suffered by the enemy, their morale has gone very low. They are entirely depending upon their air support to carry on fighting, but whenever they have been attacked by our forces, they have always fled from the battlefield.

“In the name of thousands of martyrs who have patiently suffered for the cause of Free India, and in the name of the heroes of the A. H. F. who have sacrificed their lives at the altar of India's Independence, I call upon all the officers and men of No. 2 Division of Azad Hind Fauj to hunt for the enemies of India and destroy them wherever they may be found. Jai Hind.”

Thus, the I. N. A. continued its fight against heavy odds undeterred even when it admitted the superiority of the enemy and clearly saw that the end was not far off. “We are prepared to continue fighting in the front line”. said Col. G. S. Dhillon in a letter to Col.

Shah Nawaz Khan. "We will sacrifice our lives to maintain the honour of Azad Hind Fauj. Water or no water, rations or no rations, will not affect our fighting capacity... assuring you that we will fight up to the last."

As a reply to this, Netaji encouraged Col. Dhillon and his men on the front: "I have been following the work of your Regiment and of yourself with the closest interest, and I want to congratulate you on the manner in which you have stood up to face bravely the situation that is so difficult. I want to express my complete confidence in you and in all those who are standing by you in the present crisis.

"Whatever happens to us individually in the course of this historic struggle, there is no power on earth that can keep India enslaved any longer. Whether we live and work, or whether we die fighting, we must, under all circumstances, have a complete confidence that the cause for which we are striving is bound to triumph. It is the finger of God that is pointing the way towards India's freedom. We have only to do our duty and to pay the price of India's liberty. Our hearts are with you and with all who are with you in the present struggle which is paving the way to our national salvation. Please convey

my warmest greetings to all the officers and men under you and accept same yourself. May God bless you and crown your efforts with success. Jai Hind."

Charged as if by the electric current of Netaji's words, Col. Dhillon and his men on the front dashed forth with unprecedented bravery and courage, and upon a flat piece of land without any cover, jumped upon the enemy despite heavy Artillery firing and bombardment by the Fighting Planes. This memorable incident is narrated by Col. Dhillon under the caption : "*The Charge of the Immortals*" in his Diary. It runs as under :—

"It was flat stretch of land without any cover either from view or from fire, except a shallow dry pond near which three roads of great tactical importance met. Four miles North-west of this point was a Hill 1423 feet high behind which the enemy Artillery was located so as to cover the road junction and the area south of it, the occupation of which would effect the entire plan of operations.

"At a key point like this was placed a Company of Azad Hind Fauj under the command of 2/Lt. Gian Singh Bisht, trained at the Officers Training School, Azad Hind Fauj. The Company was only ninety-eight strong. They had no Machine-guns or even light

machine-guns. Good old rifles were their only weapons of defence or offence apart from two A/TK mines. Their orders were to check any enemy advance at all costs.

“They remained in that position for two days, but the enemy dared not advance. Then on 16th of March 1945, starting early morning hostile Fighting Planes bombed and Machine-gunned their positions until about 11 a.m. Having got rid of all the load they had, aeroplanes went away.

“Then the enemy Guns from behind the Hill started registering, and behind this barrage of Artillery fire advanced a column of motorised Infantry consisting of 13 tanks, 11 armoured cars and 70 trucks. Half of this column made its way straight towards the pond where two Forward Platoons of the Company were in positions. Lead and explosives were being thrown out of the Armoured Fighting Vehicles, but this would not frighten our boys; they waited in their trenches for the infantry to debuss. Tanks and armoured cars like steel monsters creating hell with their fire-power approached so close that they started charging on to our trenches so as to crush and cripple our men under their heavy weight. Two mines were thrown in their way which unluckily did not burst, but they caused monsters to stop, which having stopped, became stationary.

pill-boxes oozing out most inhuman forms of killing materials.

“There was no communication between this post and the Battalion H.Qrs. when 2/Lieut. Gian Singh appreciated that their Rifles fire was no match to the enemy’s Mortars, Machine-guns, Light Automatics and Hand Grenades, and their staying in trenches meant certain death or captivity with no loss to the enemy; he ordered, “*Charge*”. Leading the assault he shouted slogans of “*Netaji ki Jai*”, “*Inqalab Zindabad*”, “*Azad Hindustan Zindabad*” and “*Chalo Delhi*”. All the men responded to slogans which echoed above the enemy fire. This was the only support which these heroes had against the superior armament of the enemy. In the name of India and *Indian Independence*, they charged into the enemy trucks. The enemy immediately debussed. Hand to hand fighting ensued which lasted for full two hours, but our heroes would not give in; forty of them sacrificed their lives after killing more than their equal number of the enemy. Their unconquerable spirit harassed the enemy so much that he started retreating.

“Just then, 2/Lieut. Gian Singh called forward his third Platoon Commander 2/Lieut. Ram Singh, and was giving out orders when a bullet struck on his head and he fell down never to give out orders again. 2/Lieut. Ram

Singh then collected the remnants of the Company and reorganized.

“2/Lieut. Gian Singh Bisht used to tell his men that he would die with them; he fulfilled his promise and remained their comrade in life and death. This was a glorious deed, of which the History will remain witness as long as there is world. 2/Lieut. Gian Singh and his men lived up to the ideals of our great Leader—the Netaji—and have laid down their lives fighting by their posts to build up a tradition for us to follow. In FREE India the spirit of these Heroes, who knew no defeat, will be worshipped for generations to come and will inspire the future sons of India to live up to such high ideals.”

V.

THE STORM SUBSIDES

The Indian National Army fought with utmost bravery in the most trying circumstances on the field of battle, but it could not make any headway against an enemy numerically and technically superior to it with sheer courage and high morale alone in the absence of proper means of modern warfare and adequate resources. Its allies—the Japanese, began to lose ground after the fall of Matikyina. One by one, Meiktila, Mandalay and Maymyo fell to the British like ripe fruits, and the end seemed not far off. On March 14, 1945 Netaji issued a Special Order emphasizing the fact that every member of the Azad Hind Fauj should regard himself as the Custodian of the honour and dignity of the force. After a purge, and after the unwilling elements had been given an opportunity to leave the army, he said that the punishment would be death if there was any case of cowardice. He declared that “for the members of the revolutionary army there is no crime more heinous than to be a coward . . . Special rewards will be given to those who give information of treacherous elements and those who arrest and shoot cowardly elements.”

The end came within sight by the breakdown of the Soviet-Jap Neutrality Pact in April 1945. A special messenger brought Netaji's orders to the Fauj to "*Retreat*" and "like small children", says an account, "these hefty, brave warriors cried. With broken hearts they turned their backs on the battlefield and retreated. That day none of them ate. Was it the beginning of the end? That was the unspoken question on their faces."

On April 24, 1945, Major Tanaka, Chief of the Staff of the Japanese Headquarters at Rangoon, and Netaji Subhas left with their respective staffs for Bangkok. Before leaving Burma for good, Netaji issued the following Special Order of the day to his men :

"Brave officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj !

"It is with a very heavy heart that I am leaving Burma—the scene of the many heroic battles that you have fought since February 1945, and are still fighting. In Imphal and Burma, we have lost the first round in our Fight for Independence. But it is only the first round. We have many more rounds to fight. I am a born optimist and I shall not admit defeat under any circumstances. Your brave deeds in the battle against the enemy on the plains of Imphal, the hills and jungles of

Arakan and the oil-field area and other localities in Burma will live in the history of our struggle for Independence for all times.

“Comrades ! At this critical hour, I have only one word of command to give you, and that is that if you have to go down temporarily, then go down as heroes ; go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline. The future generations of Indians who will be born, not as slaves but as free men, because of your colossal sacrifices, will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forebears, fought and lost the battle in Manipur, Assam and Burma, but through temporary failure you paved the way to ultimate success and glory.

“My unshakable faith in India’s liberation remains unaltered. I am leaving in your safe hands our National Tricolour, our national honour, and the best traditions of Indian Warriors. I have no doubt whatsoever that you, the vanguard of India’s army of liberation, will sacrifice everything, even life itself, to uphold India’s National honour, so that your comrades who will continue the fight elsewhere may have before them your shining example to inspire them at all times.

“If I had my own way, I would have preferred to stay with you in adversity and

share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the advice of my Ministers and high ranking officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for emancipation. Knowing my countrymen in East-Asia and inside India, I can assure you that they will continue the fight under all circumstances and that all your suffering and sacrifice will not be in vain. So far as I am concerned, I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge that I took on the 21st of October, 1943, to do all in my power to serve the interests of 38 crores of my countrymen and fight for their liberation. I appeal to you, in conclusion to cherish the same optimism as myself and to believe, like myself, that the darkest hour always precedes the dawn. India shall be free — and before long.

“May God bless you. Inqalab Zindabad; Azad Hind Zindabad. Jai Hind.”

About 7,000 men and officers of the Indian National Army were left in Rangoon under the command of Col. Loganadan to protect life and property of the civilians. The Indian Independence League kept on functioning as usual under the leadership of Mr. J. N. Bahaduri.

During the period between April 24 and May 4, 1945 when Rangoon finally surrendered

to the British, the Indian National Army held charge of the town, there was not a single case of looting and robbery. On May 5, Brigadier Lauder of the 36th Indian Infantry took over Rangoon from Col. Loganadan who was assured that all the I.N.A. personnel would be allowed to return to India as free men and women. Their arms and equipment were collected and they were asked to occupy the barracks in the Central and Insein jails at Rangoon, which, Brigadier Lauder pointed out, should not be considered as such for they had been lodged therein only because no other accommodation was available. Col. Loganadan was allowed to retain the command of the I.N.A. men and permitted to administer them according to the I.N.A. regulations. The officers and men were, however, asked to remove the I.N.A. badges, for Brigadier Lauder said that since the I.N.A. was not recognised by the Allied forces, its officers may not be paid due respect by them in the town, and that might perhaps lead to any misunderstanding or trouble.

The Indian Independence League was also allowed to carry on its non-political work under Mr. Bahaduri and re-open some of the dispensaries in the town which had hitherto been closed down. The Azad Hind Bank was also allowed to continue till May 19, 1945, when it was taken over by the British. A

week after that, on May 28, Mr. Bahaduri and other leaders were arrested and thus, the roll of the Azad Hind Government came to an end. The Indian National Army finally surrendered on receipt of Netaji's orders to cease fire on August 17, 1945.

Netaji went from Rangoon to Bangkok, and from there to Singapore where he stayed till August 15, 1945. On the said date Emperor Hirohito of Japan issued his surrender rescript, and Netaji was advised to come over to Tokyo for 'transfer to Manchuria where he would be safe.' Netaji and his Staff Officer Habib-ur-Rehman, therefore, left Singapore in a Japanese Army bomber on August 16. He arrived at Bangkok next morning and changed to another plane in which he flew to Tourance in Indo-China where he spent the night. Leaving next morning, the plane broke its journey at Taihoku in Formosa where after taking off it developed engine trouble, and had hardly gained an altitude of 300 feet when it nose-dived and crashed. It is reported that Netaji, who 'was sitting immediately behind the pilot... suffering head injury and covered with flaming gasoline rushed from the plane trying to rip off his uniform. Rehman, though his hands were burning, succeeded in removing most of Bose's clothings... Bose was conscious for 6 hours until he died. Rehman lying in bed next to Bose, was severely burned

about hands and face, but recovered sufficiently to leave hospital three weeks later. Rehman requested that Bose's body be taken to Tokyo, but the coffin which was Japanese prepared was over six feet long and could not be taken in plane. Then the body was cremated at Taihoku on August 22 and Rehman took ashes to Tokyo, where Indian community held funeral service on September 14 at the Renkoji Temple, Suginami.'

Many people in India, East-Asia and Japan suspect the credibility of this report, and believe that once again Bose has performed his vanishing trick only to come out before the world at some opportune moment when things are settled down. The view seems to be quite plausible for nobody can say for certain that Subhas Chandra Bose is dead.

VI

JAI HIND

The story of the brave men and women of the Indian National Army who had taken up arms for the freedom of India was hardly known to any one outside East-Asia before August 1945. Rumours about the I.N.A., and the activities of Mohan Singh and Subhas Chandra Bose in the Far East had, of course, been buzzing about the country right from the time of the fall of Singapore, but in the absence of any substantial evidence very little attention had been paid to them by any one. It was in the beginning of August that people began to whisper about the arrival and detention of some thousands of the members of the Azad Hind Fauj in the Red Fort at Delhi. The veil was lifted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru almost immediately the war ended. His statement on the issue appeared on August 20 as under :

“There is one matter which has been paining and troubling me for some time, but to which I have made no reference so far, because any mention of it might have been misunderstood... But now that the war has ended, there is no such reason for remaining

silent on that issue. This concerns the 20,000 or more prisoners in India of the so-called Indian National Army which had been formed in Malaya and Burma. I was of the opinion three years ago, and am still of the opinion that the leaders and others of this army had been misguided in many ways and had failed to appreciate larger consequences of their unfortunate association with the Japanese.

“Three years ago I was asked in Calcutta what I would do if Subhas Bose led an army into India on the plea of liberating India? I replied then that I would not hesitate to resist this invasion even though I did not doubt that Subhas Bose and his Indian colleagues and followers were motivated by the desire to free India, and were in no way mere tools of the Japanese. Nevertheless they had put themselves on the wrong side and were functioning under Japanese auspices. No person could come to India in this way under such foreign auspices. Therefore, whatever the motive behind this people, they had to be resisted in India or outside.

“But the situation has completely changed with the end of war. And now a very large number of officers and soldiers of this Indian National Army, as it is called, are prisoners and some of them at least have been executed.



Capt. Shah Nawaz Khan

Lt. G. S. Dhillon

Capt. P. K. Sahgal

“Though proper information is lacking, it is reliably stated that very bad treatment is being given to them in prisons and forts where they are kept, and many of them live in the shadow of death. I do not wish to complain to the British for the strict military rule. They could plead justification for treating with rebels in any way they like. But as an Indian and as one representing in this respect the views of almost all Indians of whatever party or group, I would say that it would be a tragedy if these officers and men are liquidated by way of punishment. Whatever their feelings and mistakes may have been in the past, and these were serious, there can be no doubt that they are a fine body of youngmen taken as a whole, fine officers and fine rank and file, and that their dominating motive was love for India's freedom. At any time it would have been wrong to treat them too harshly but at this time when it is said that big changes are impending in India it would be a very grave mistake leading to far-reaching consequences if they were treated just as ordinary rebels. The punishment given to them would in effect be a punishment on all Indians and a deep wound would be created in millions of hearts. In this matter fortunately there is no communal question, for these officers and men are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs ...

“In view of all this, I earnestly trust that nothing will be done in regard to these prisoners of war which will lead to an additional festering sore in India’s mind and heart. With the end of war the immediate exigency is past, and larger considerations should prevail.”

Immediately after this, the I.N.A. question became the topic of the day and public opinion became strong in urging the release of the men. On August 27, the Government issued a Communique in which it declared that “the offence of going over to the enemy and fighting against his former comrades is the most serious offence that a soldier can commit. It is punishable with death by the laws of almost all countries, and those who have committed this offence and been recaptured can claim no rights as belligerents or prisoners of war.

“The Government of India feel, however, that allowance must be made for the circumstances in which the ranks and file found themselves placed after their capture. From that date they were in no position to learn the truth of the progress of the war or to hear any news but false and propagandist Japanese or German reports.

“Some of them were misled by this propaganda or gave way to pressure or the desire

for better treatment, and joined the enemy with no motives beyond an immediate improvement in their living conditions. Those men, therefore, who seem to have been merely misguided—and they are the majority—will be treated with clemency.

“...There remains a number to whom, if the facts against them are proved to be true, it would be wrong to extend the same measure of clemency. Among them are some who are alleged to have killed their former comrades, or to have been responsible for the capture or torture of Allied soldiers, and some leaders who appear to have consciously embraced the Japanese or German cause.

“For these men there can be no alternative but to allow trial by court martial to proceed. They will be allowed to choose counsel to represent them, and the trials will not be held in *camera*.”...

In the meantime the question of the fate of the I. N. A. men excited public interest to the highest pitch. In this respect Kunwar Sir Dalip Singh, a former Judge of the Lahore High Court stated to the press on August 30, 1945: “...the fate of the men of the National Army of India might become an extremely evil precedent for men who misconceived their duty with the highest of motives. This is a

prospect that might well daunt the hardest heart . . . I wish to present to the British Government the idea that it is to their interest to show mercy to all these men. It might be considered presumption on my part to present any such issue to the British, for their political genius and far-seeing insight is well-known. It might well be called, in the vulgar phrase 'teaching your grandmother to suck eggs.' Yet, there are times when the most level-headed and fair-minded people may be moved by resentment to act against their own long-term interests, and it is for this reason that I venture to place my point of view for consideration by the authorities.

" . . . Severity shown to any of these misguided men will, I believe, leave a legacy of hatred in the hearts of a great many Indians. I must not be understood not to see that the resentment of the British is not unjustifiable. To them it must appear that these men have bitten the hand that fed them. I have little doubt that the British will not shoot or hang all the 30,000 men or thereabouts involved, but the temptation to select the worst, from the British point of view, of these men for exemplary punishment must be almost irresistible. I can only repeat that severity even to one man is likely to be remembered and mercy shown to the many is likely to be forgotten. Therefore, I would plead for mercy to all without exception...'

A few days after this statement appeared in the press, the Congress Working Committee met in Poona and resolved that 'for reasons of far-reaching consequences, and in view of the termination of the war, it would be a tragedy if these officers, men and women were punished for the offence of having laboured, however, mistakenly for the freedom of India. They can be of greatest service in the heavy work of building up a new and free India. They have already suffered heavily and any additional punishment will not only be unjustified but will cause sorrow in innumerable homes and to the Indian people as a whole, and will widen the gulf between India and England. The All India Congress Committee, therefore, earnestly trusts that these officers and men and women in this army will be released. . . ."

Furthermore, the Congress Working Committee on September 22, 1945 resolved to appoint a Committee for the Defence of the officers, men and women of the I.N.A. who might be brought up for trial. The Committee consisted of a panel of nine senior counsels for the Defence. They were: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bhulabhai Desai, Dr. K. N. Katju, Rai Bahadur Badri Dass, Asaf Ali, Kanwar Sir Dalip Singh, Bakhshi Sir Tek Chand, and P. K. Sen.

The Court Martial of I.N.A. men commenced at 10 a.m. on Monday, November 5,

prospect that might well daunt the hardest heart . . . I wish to present to the British Government the idea that it is to their interest to show mercy to all these men. It might be considered presumption on my part to present any such issue to the British, for their political genius and far-seeing insight is well-known. It might well be called, in the vulgar phrase 'teaching your grandmother to suck eggs.' Yet, there are times when the most level-headed and fair-minded people may be moved by resentment to act against their own long-term interests, and it is for this reason that I venture to place my point of view for consideration by the authorities.

" . . . Severity shown to any of these misguided men will, I believe, leave a legacy of hatred in the hearts of a great many Indians. I must not be understood not to see that the resentment of the British is not unjustifiable. To them it must appear that these men have bitten the hand that fed them. I have little doubt that the British will not shoot or hang all the 30,000 men or thereabouts involved, but the temptation to select the worst, from the British point of view, of these men for exemplary punishment must be almost irresistible. I can only repeat that severity even to one man is likely to be remembered and mercy shown to the many is likely to be forgotten. Therefore, I would plead for mercy to all without exception...'

A few days after this statement appeared in the press, the Congress Working Committee met in Poona and resolved that 'for reasons of far-reaching consequences, and in view of the termination of the war, it would be a tragedy if these officers, men and women were punished for the offence of having laboured, however, mistakenly for the freedom of India. They can be of greatest service in the heavy work of building up a new and free India. They have already suffered heavily and any additional punishment will not only be unjustified but will cause sorrow in innumerable homes and to the Indian people as a whole, and will widen the gulf between India and England. The All India Congress Committee, therefore, earnestly trusts that these officers and men and women in this army will be released. . . ."

Furthermore, the Congress Working Committee on September 22, 1945 resolved to appoint a Committee for the Defence of the officers, men and women of the I.N.A. who might be brought up for trial. The Committee consisted of a panel of nine senior counsels for the Defence. They were: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bhulabhai Desai, Dr. K. N. Katju, Rai Bahadur Badri Dass, Asaf Ali, Kanwar Sir Dalip Singh, Bakhshi Sir Tek Chand, and P. K. Sen.

The Court Martial of I.N.A. men commenced at 10 a.m. on Monday, November 5,

1945 in the Red Fort, Delhi. The accused were :

Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, 1/14 Punjab Regiment, Captain P. K. Sahgal, 2/10 Baluch Regiment, and Lieutenant, G. S. Dhillon, 1/14 Punjab Regiment.

The Court Martial consisted of seven members. They were: Major General A. B. Blaxland (President), Brigadier A. J. H. Bourke, Lt.-Col. C.P. Scott, Lt. Col. T.I. Stevenson, Lt.-Col. Nasir Ali Khan, Major B. Pritam Singh, and Major Banwari Lal. Col. F.C.A. Kerin was the Judge-Advocate, and Sir N. P. Engineer Advocate-General of India acted as Counsel for the Prosecution.

All the three accused were charged for committing the civil offence of waging war against the King under Section 121-A of the I.P.C. Captain Dhillon was charged with the murder of Hari Singh, Dulichand, Dorai Singh and Dharam Singh at or near Popa Hill in Burma on or about March 6, 1945, and Captain Sahgal was charged with abetting the murder of these four men. Captain Shah Nawaz Khan was charged with abetting the murder of Gunner Mohammad Husain on or about March 29, 1945. All the three I.N.A. officers emphatically answered 'not guilty' to all the charges.

The Prosecution produced documents showing that the three officers were in the Indian army, that while prisoners of war they joined the I.N.A., and as its officers waged war against the King by invading India, and that they ordered execution of five sepoys. Lt. Nag, a former member of the I.N.A., was the first witness who gave evidence about the formation of the I.N.A., and its activities. In response to Bhulabhai Desai's plea for the adjournment of the Court for two weeks for having time to prepare the defence case, the Court Martial resumed hearing on November 21, 1945. The cross-examination of Lt. Nag by Mr. Desai on the said date showed that the predominant motive of the Azad Hind Government and the I.N.A. was to free India for the sake of Indians, and that they were acting as Allies of Japan as equal partners, and in no way subordinate to the Japanese Government.

Twenty-six more prosecution witnesses were examined by the Court Martial between November, 23 and 30 when it adjourned till December 7, as the last prosecution witness Lt.-Col. J. A. Kitson, who was then engaged in operations in Java, was not available. His evidence was essential as the Prosecution Counsel stated that when Captain Sahgal surrendered in April last in Burma, he sent certain terms in the note of surrender to Col. Kitson, and they had to be testified in the Court.

On December 7, Lt.-Col. Kitson, the last prosecution witness narrated the story of the surrender of Captain Sahgal and his men. After the conclusion of the prosecution evidence the three accused made their statements before the Court Martial. In his statement Captain Shah Nawaz Khan stated : "Bred in traditions of loyalty to the British Crown, I had known India only through the eyes of young British officers. When I met Netaji and heard his speeches for the first time in my life, I saw India through the eyes of an Indian... I was deeply impressed by his selflessness, his absolute devotion to his country, his frankness and his refusal to bow before the Japanese wishes. I knew that in his hands India's honour was safe. He would never barter it for anything in the world. He warned all those who stayed in the I.N.A. to be prepared to face thirst, hunger, forced marches and in the end death.

"When with my own eyes I saw the enthusiasm of thousands of poverty-stricken Indians in the Far East who gave to the I.N.A. all that they possessed and whole families joined the Azad Hind Fauj and became '*fakirs*' for the sake of their country, I knew we had a real leader and that he, in the name of millions of poverty-stricken, unarmed and helpless Indians, appealed to us to come forward and sacrifice our lives for their liberation.

No honourable Indian could have refused this much to him.

“In joining the I.N.A. I was prompted only by motives of patriotism. I fought a straightforward and honourable fight on the battlefield against the most overwhelming odds... No mercenary or puppet army could have faced hardships as the I.N.A. did who fought only for India's independence. I do not deny having taken part in the fight, but I did so as a member of regular forces of the Provisional Government of Free India who waged war for the liberation of their country according to the rules of civilized warfare.”

Captain Sahgal, who next made his statement, said : “I deny being guilty of any offence with which I have been charged. I also maintain that my trial before this court martial is illegal.” Further, in the course of his statement he said : “I claim that in the fighting in the I.N.A., I committed no offence. On the other hand, I have served my country to the best of my ability. I claim further that I am entitled to all the privileges of a prisoner of war.”

Lt. Dhillon, who followed Captain Sahgal, said in his statement that it was at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, that he learned to serve his country above everything

else. There he read in Chetwood Hall in block letters in gold: "The honour, welfare and safety of your country comes first, always and every time. The comfort, safety and welfare of the men you command comes next. Your own safety and comfort comes last, always and every time."

"Ever since I read this motto the sense of duty towards my country and my men had under all circumstances reigned supreme in my thoughts. It was with this motto in front of me that I served my country as an officer of the Indian Army...

"I am further advised that in point of law my trial by the Court Martial is illegal. I joined the I.N.A. with the best and purest of motives. As a member of the I.N.A. I was able to help a number of prisoners of war with money and materials. The I.N.A. was able to protect life, property and honour of Indians residing in the Far East."

From December 8 to 13 the Defence witnesses were examined by the Court Martial. The prominent witnesses were Mr. Subro Ohta of the Japanese Foreign office, Major-General Kata Kura, the Chief of Staff of Japanese General Headquarters, Mr. Renza Sawada the Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. T. Hachiya, who was appointed Amba-

sador to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind at Rangoon by the Nippon Government, Mr. S.A. Aiyar, the Propaganda Minister of the the Azad Hind Government, and Lt.-Col. Loganadan, the Chief Commissioner of Andaman Islands appointed by the Azad Hind Government. They all tried to explain the validity of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the role of the I.N.A.

The Court adjourned for four days after the conclusion of the Defence Evidence.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the Chief Defence Counsel delivered his closing address on December 17 and 18 keeping the audience spell-bound with the irresistible logic with which he had built up the defence. He spoke for about ten hours. He began : " During the last many days you have heard evidence on the two charges with which my clients, the accused before you, have been arraigned. Shortly stated, the two charges are waging war against the King and, without detailing anything, murder and abetment of murder, in that certain deserters were tried and ordered to be shot. My submission to the Court is that substantially there is really one charge before the Court, because in so far as the charge of murder is concerned it is a part of the first charge ; and I say so for this reason that it would be quite possible, in the case of a charge of waging war

against the King, to be able to charge every single act of firing a shot, which would be, I think, *reducio ad absurdum* ; and therefore, it will be my duty later on to point out to the Court that really and truly there is only one charge before the Court, and that is waging war against the King."

Mr. Desai then addressing the Court said that " this case has naturally aroused a considerable amount of public interest. It is not for me to say whether it is right or not, but the fact remains that it is so, and opinions have been expressed from the point of view of the public and from the point of view of what I might call 'official sources' beginning with the Viceroy of India."

Concluding his opening remarks he said that he would categorically state the conclusions of fact and then proceed to explain the law. He asked the Court to ask him to go into the details of evidence if they considered it necessary. There were 250 pages of evidence and about 150 pages of exhibits.

Proceeding Mr. Desai gave a brief history the formation of the I. N. A., and other important events in that connection. Coming to the conclusion he said: " The first conclusion of fact which we ask this Court to accept is, that the Provisional Government of Free India

was formally established and proclaimed.” He then read out the Proclamation of the Azad Hind Government. “It is also in evidence before the Court”, said Mr. Desai, “that the Indian Independence League became the executive of the Provincial Government which organized, so far as it was possible to do in those wialike conditions, the care of the people who owed allegiance to it. In the month of June 1944, as the evidence is quite clear,—it is also in the Exhibit—in Malaya alone, 230,000 persons actually took written Oaths of Allegiance to the Government... That is the reason why I suggest that the Provisional Government was an organized Government...

“Then, Sir, the next fact which I submit is established before the Court, is that this Government was recognized by the Axis powers... The next fact which I submit is established is that this State had an army which was properly organized, having its own distinctive badges and emblems. I am obliged to the Prosecution in this matter for I was spared the necessity of having to prove this proposition. They put in document after document to show that the Indian National Army was properly organised. First, that it was regulated by an Indian National Army Act...

“The next important fact which I think must be mentioned is, that the Indian National

Army was formed with two purposes. The main purpose was the securing of the liberation of India. . . The other object also was, which was somewhat subordinate but useful purpose, the protection such as could be afforded to the Indian inhabitants of Burma and Malaya, particularly during the days when law and order in those parts of the country was poorly looked after, the lives and the honour and the property of the people was not quite so easily protected. . .

Then about the resources of the Azad Hind Government, Mr. Desai stated: "It has been proved before the Court that some 20 crores of rupees were in fact donated to the State out of which was maintained the civil government and the army. Mr. Dina Nath, who impressed this Court, gave extremely clear evidence on this head. He was one of the Directors of the Azad Hind Bank and he told the Court that between Burma and Malaya, during that short period of time, the State had resources to the tune of 20 crores of rupees, in addition to the produce of Ziawadi ... What I am saying is that in so far as the resousces of the State were concerned, they were full and adequate for the purpose which the new State had then in view."

Mr. Desai then argued at length the main point whether the Azad Hind Government was

entitled to make war for the purpose of liberation of the country. He said that Section 79 of the I.P.C. laid down that 'nothing is an offence which is done by any person who is justified by law.' Thus anything permissible under international law could not be treated as a civil offence. He claimed that "any war made for the purpose of liberating oneself from a foreign yoke is completely justified by moral and international law." He further submitted that international law recognized an intermediate stage—that of an army of insurgents carrying on war in anticipation of independent statehood—and the accused had definitely reached that stage. The case of the the I.N.A. contended Mr. Desai, was even stronger and any action against them would be a breach of international law. The Prosecution Counsel wanted him to tell the Court what the German view was of the matter. Marshal Keitel had declared that the Maquis were not entitled to protection of international law. Mr. Desai vigorously commented: "I take my stand on the American and British view as expressed by General Eisenhower. My friend the Prosecution Counsel is welcome to take his stand on the German view."

He added: "The British civilized instinct has recognized that if a struggle for freedom is waged, then it is right that the privileges and immunities to the fighting armies be conceded."

As regards the relation of the Azad Hind Government with the Japs, Mr. Desai stated "Where was the question of the I.N.A. being an instrument in the hands of the Japanese? It was they (the Japanese) who undertook to assist in liberating India and hand over all liberated areas to the Provisional Government. . . . The Japanese might be helping with a view to improving their prospects of trade in India on which they relied for maintaining their standard of living. So far as the I.N.A. was concerned it was a genuine war of independence for them as a result of the successful termination of which they expected their freedom." Further, he contended that the Japanese witness in reply to the Prosecution Counsel's question had made it clear that the freedom of India was one of the war aims of the Japanese. The whole cross-examination had crashed to the ground on account of this reply.

Resuming his address on December 18, Mr. Desai read from the American Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776, extracts stating that men were equal by God and were entitled to liberty, and that if any Government became destructive of this end, it was the right of the people to abolish such a Government. There was before the American people a conflict between allegiance to the King and allegiance to their country, and they chose allegiance to their country in preference to allegiance

to a foreign King. It was because of that resolve to be independent that America had become strong and saved the civilized world in the last war. Mr. Desai said: "If this illustration is not going to be respected, justice will be denied completely." By quoting several witnesses Mr. Desai further contended that the I.N.A. was started only for gaining the freedom of India, that its officers and men were prepared to fight anybody, including the Japanese if the latter stood in the way of India's freedom.

Further, as regards the status of the I.N.A., Mr. Desai stated. "Apart from what you may call the general higher strategy, the Indian National Army was completely independent. And though I am not anticipating a point which it will be my duty to argue, namely, whether or not the question arose that people joined the I.N.A. because they might be worse off as prisoners of war, the less said about it the better. The evidence clearly shows that the only ration that the I.N.A. had apart from sugar and oil which was nominal, was rice, and that was the luxury which attracted men to the I.N.A. The question really is that one set of men believed in a cause and the other set of men either from supineness or otherwise did not, and nobody ever gave thought to the question as to whether one would be better off or not. One thing is quite certain; that apart from what actually happened by the conduct of

the Japanese, those who joined the I.N.A. were certainly facing the possibilities which every soldier has to face, unless he wishes to avoid it, which prisoners of war could, namely, fighting with the opponent army."

"The next point", he said, "is, that the I.N.A. was a purely voluntary army, and, notwithstanding the attempt made, the Prosecution entirely failed to prove that it was not voluntary, because from time to time it has been proved before this Court by the speeches made by the accused and Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, which indicate that at every stage opportunity was given to every member of the I.N.A. to withdraw if he chose to do so."

Next he dealt with the allegation of torture inflicted on prisoners to make them join the I.N.A. He analysed the evidence of several prosecution witnesses to show that in one case the scuffle was the result of refusal by prisoners to do fatigue duty, in another case it was due to stealing and killing of a cow and in the third it was due to an act of indiscipline . . . "In none of these cases", said he, "was any punishment, much less torture, practised due to any one's refusal to join the I.N.A."

As regards the alleged shooting of four other persons, Mr. Desai submitted that his case was that the sentences were never carried

out. He further submitted that there were similar cases in which the sentences were not executed and the accused were pardoned. He pleaded that there should be no presumption in law against his clients merely because the orders were passed and the minimum that he wanted from the court was that they should say that there was a reasonable doubt about the sentences having been carried out. In that case he asked the Court to give the benefit of doubt to his clients.

Further, he argued that even if the alleged offence was committed, it was no offence because no personal liability was attached to acts done in due prosecution of war under the provisions of the I.N.A.

In the end summing up the main points which he had made before the Court, Mr. Desai said that the three men had been a part of a regular army of a regularly formed government and were entitled to privileges of belligerents and were not governed by municipal laws but by international law. It was not correct to state that the Court Martial was not concerned with international law because section 79 laid down that acts committed under any 'law' were not punishable and the word 'law' included recognised principles of international law.

After Mr. Desai's address the Counsel for Prosecution requested the Court for time to

prepare his closing address. The Court, therefore, adjourned till December 22, 1945.

The Prosecution Counsel on the said date submitted in his address that all the accused had been proved beyond any reasonable doubt, and that there was no defence in law to the charges against the accused. "So far as the Court is concerned," he said, "its hands are tied in the matter of punishment. The minimum punishment which this court can give is transportation for life, if the court findings are against the accused, but if the court feels on the evidence before it that the case is a fit one for mitigation of punishment, it is open to the court to add a rider to its findings and sentence to that effect for the consideration of the confirming officer."

At the request of the Judge-Advocate, the court adjourned until December 29, when the Judge-Advocate summed up the case.

On January 3, 1946 a Press Communique announced:—

"Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, Captain Sahgal and Lieut. Dhillon have stood their trial by Court Martial on charges against all three of waging war against the King-Emperor... The findings of the court are that all three are guilty of the charge of waging war, while,

Captain Shah Nawaz Khan is also convicted of the charge of abetment of murder. Lieut. Dhillon is acquitted of the charge of murder and Captain Sahgal of the charge of abetment of murder.

“Having found the accused guilty of the charge of waging war, the Court was bound to sentence the accused either to death or to transportation for life, no lesser sentence was permissible under the law... The confirming officer is, however, competent to mitigate, commute or remit the sentences...”

In view of the above the Commander-in-Chief decided to remit the sentence of transportation for life against all the three accused. He, however, confirmed the sentences of cashiering and forfeiture of arrears of pay and allowances.

On the same evening the three officers of the I.N.A. were set free from the Red Fort.

Immediately on their release the said officers issued a joint statement: ~~that this has been a victory~~ ~~Throughout the trial we felt that we were~~ ~~only being tried at the bar of a British~~ ~~martial, but also at the~~ ~~opinion. It has been~~ ~~joy to us that the India~~ ~~ciated our work in the~~

“We have always maintained that our fight outside India was a part of the struggle for Indian Independence which was going on inside India. In our small way we have tried and served India to the best of our ability. We took a pledge before our Netaji, our Supreme Commander, to fight for our country’s freedom and to dedicate our lives for that noble cause. Our lives belong to Mother India and we shall carry on our struggle for Indian Independence under the leadership of the Congress.

“At the end we want to convey our heartfelt thanks to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Katju, Mr. Asaf Ali and others for their efforts in conducting our case and other cases of the I.N.A. In this direction our work is not yet finished. Thousands of our comrades are still behind the bars. We shall devote ourselves to the task of achieving their release as early as possible.”

“JAI HIND.”

ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
24	24	attainmen	attainment
88	2	there	their
88	20	nurees	nurses
105	26	H.A.F.	A.H.F.

12340'

